

The Anatomy Of Fire

Chapter 5: **Illumination**

Embers

Sparking A New Spirit Of Enterprise

Chaplet 5.1

By Tom Brown

- *In playing ball, or in life, a person occasionally gets the opportunity to do something great. When that time comes, only two things matter: being prepared to seize the moment and having the courage to take your best swing.*

— **Baseball Legend**
Hank Aaron
(1934 -)



That very first day
On that very first job:
The call, the work, the quest —
How you did aspire!

You stormed all tasks,
You donned no masks,
You seldom felt much higher.

The secret to that heady time?
Oh, to be driven by the fire.



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No “boss” could make you feel
Like that —
No, not then, not even now.
The pay for you was more than
cash:

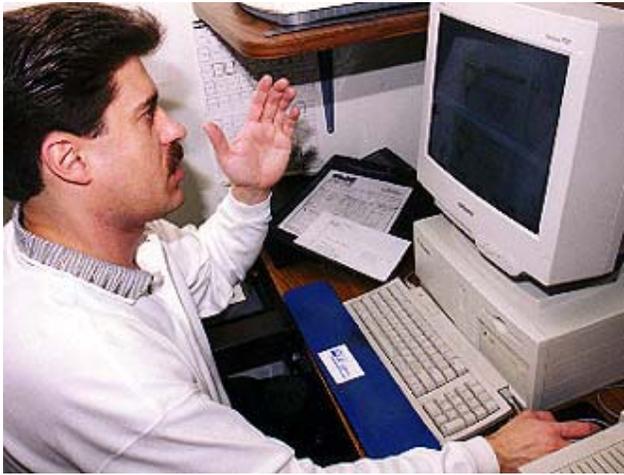
Striving hard, showing strong,
And pining to achieve.

The advances sought,
The problems caught,
Each improvement wrought —
It was what you
Created,
Crafted,
Sired.

The magic of those moments
when?
Oh, to be driven by the fire.

How different now,
How sadly less,
It seems your work berates.
The job’s all task;
Your smile’s a mask;
False starts, you fluctuate.

It doesn’t feel so warm inside,
When you’re an ember dying.
When wonder’s gone,



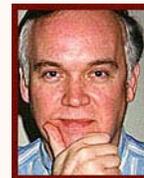
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What would it take,
Whom would you need,
To spark that flame again?
Is it leading,
Or being led,
That lacquers a life with glee?

That first day
On that first job:
You knew the answer then.

The future begs; will you
recall?
Oh, to be driven by the fire!

To learn more about the author...



www.thomaslewisbrown.com/bio.pdf

The Anatomy Of Fire

Chapter 5: **Illumination**

Leaders

Sparking A New Spirit Of Enterprise

Chaplet 5.2

By Tom Brown

- *Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.*

— **Philosopher-Writer**
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
(1749 - 1832)



One hundred years ago, what person stumbled onto the hottest fad of the day, thereby earning his company worldwide renown? Seventy-five years ago, what person sat atop the organization which had the largest cash flow and highest profits, thereby making his word, alone, seem like wisdom eternal? Fifty years ago, what person convinced the investing world that his company's future had an unshakable grasp on success, thereby bringing vast capital to dabble with and drain? Twenty-five years ago, what person controlled the bulk of the natural resource most needed at the time, thereby making him momentary king of the world's supply-demand chain? Ten years ago, what person commanded the company with the most talked about price/earnings ratio, thereby making his stock the "hot ticket" of the

day? Five years ago, what person seemed best positioned to drive his industry into the 21st Century, thereby gaining countless citations in now hard-to-find pages of the popular press? Last year, who was voted the "Most Admired" CEO, thereby adding "eternal" prestige and luster to his or her resumé?

Your inability to answer the above questions is not a failure of memory; it is a failure of definition. Though there is no reason to spurn or demean monetary affluence, there is a huge difference in winning a lottery and winning a Nobel prize. It is so easy to confuse true leadership with a momentary hop in popularity, a landslide victory, false profits, faddish acclaim. It is so easy to be swept into a world in which company-generated press releases dictate who our "leaders" are, now, at this moment. It is so easy to mistake a celebrity for a leader.

But eclat is not enterprise. The leader arduously exploring for a new idea worthy of unflinching enthusiasm, resourcefulness, resolve — an idea

Leaders reason that it is nobler to be a pilgrim for progress than a captain of commerce.

whose success and contribution to society are one and the same — is not a person duped by transient accolades nor tempted by quicksilver wealth. If diverted or deterred from their journey toward a better idea, leaders reason that it is nobler to be a pilgrim for progress than a captain of commerce.

What is a leader? I have spoken of them so far as men and women who are uniquely tuned to the taproots of history, individuals who search for ways to make people more free, more healthy, more intelligent, more prolific, more connected, more happy, or more harmonious. I have spoken of them so far as individuals who quite enjoy the journey to the new horizons in which

These make up the toolkit with which they win people's hearts.

such better ideas reside. I have spoken of them so far as men and women who create churn by creating new rules, whole new standards to serve as benchmarks for civilization.

But probe closely all the tangents of my attempts to define the concept of leadership and the kernel can quickly be found: *leaders are society's vessels for*

progressive ideas; they are the unrelenting, unyielding, unremitting force for a new idea with the promise of positive change.

We gravitate to someone who has the look of a leader not because their looks cause us to swoon nor because their status causes us to quake — nor even because their wealth causes us to kneel. That magic combination of a great new idea at the right time is a form of magnetism that derives its power from *the compelling idea* that offers a clear, distinct chance to make things better. We gravitate to someone with the look of a leader because of the soundness of his or her ideas.

Their enthusiasm, resourcefulness, resolve, and beneficence — these make up the toolkit with which they win people's hearts. More than three centuries ago, Molière observed that “A knowledgeable fool is a greater fool than an ignorant fool.” One does not lead by foisting intellectual chicanery upon thoughtless plebeians. Similarly, one does not lead by obligation; you can't lead a prison, no matter how large or how full it may be. No, journalist Walter Lippmann was thoroughly correct when he noted in the 1940s that “The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on.”

A magazine editor recently asked me to write an essay on 21st Century leadership. “What I really want to know,”

she said, “is where tomorrow’s leaders are going to come from!” I’ve thought about that request ever since. For no study of the history of leaders, as defined here, shows a distinct pattern in the genealogy of the species. And the more I have thought about it, the more inherent sense that makes. If we could predict the churn of new ideas, leadership would

That is the greeting of someone who is thinking like a leader!

seem more like milestones on a map, adroitly plotted by an organization like the Automobile Association of America. Leaders come to the world, literally, out of the blue.

So I have come full circle from my down days when I first retreated to Yellowstone to mourn the lack of leadership today. These times, like all times before, beg for the ideas to take us to tomorrow. The Indian writer and cartoonist, Priya Raj, a distinctive presence on the Internet, once sent a New Year’s salutation for “a wonderful year full of infinite possibilities.” That is the greeting of someone who is thinking like a leader!

If you are weary of pompous celebrities, populist politicians, “stars” without luminance, fads without potential, and power without providence, look wider,

look deeper, look harder. Looking back, the leaders we have had were not embraced immediately nor perhaps even widely — but their ideas prevailed. Looking forward, the leaders we crave are to be found standing right behind the new ideas we’re ready to cherish.

As do many bright teenagers, my daughter Nora abounds in new ideas. Her most frivolous and fun playground is not to be found on any street corner; it is instead that mental zone framed by her own brain cells. From her school masters and fellow students, the mass media, the books she devours, the pulsating world around her — from all of these, she demonstrates the potential for leadership each and every time she proposes some far-out solution for a problem most of us have not even thought to postulate. “You know what I’m going to invent when I grow up?” she asks, repeatedly. Yesterday the invention *du jour* was “edible tape.” Although the world seems to have survived for hundreds of years by stacking sandwich items between bread slices with an occasional toothpick inserted for stability, Nora insists that “there’s a better way.” Safe, readily-digestible, ultra-transparent “tape” is what the world needs, she insists. Just tie those food items into neat, presentable bundles and the world will, may I pun, gobble them up.

One cannot predict now whether Nora will pursue this idea. She has so many to

consider. And one cannot predict whether an item as innocent and “unnneeded” as edible tape will create trends and enterprises that will topple the tape titans (I’m thinking now of 3M) of today’s commercial world.

But lest you laugh too heartily right now, just in case you would toss aside this whimsical idea a little too fast, be assured that leading society and bringing human enterprise to the unordered and unimproved natural world has always

Let’s sing of leadership electric, of ideas that imprint the human stamp on a world hungry for new and better ways.

been about finding ideas that *glow*. The British psychologist, Havelock Ellis, noted in the 1920s that “All civilization has from time to time become a thin crust over a volcano of revolution.” Many with a bent toward placeholding did not realize just how thin the crust of civilization was at the time of their holding and hoarding. Those content with leading horses to water will never lead society to horsepower, atomic energy, and the forms of propulsion yet to be discovered. In every industry, in every country, in every art form, in every

science, in every religion, in every discipline, the leaders we crave are to be found standing right behind the new ideas we’re ready to cherish.

Let’s sing of leadership electric, of ideas that imprint the human stamp on a world hungry for new and better ways, no matter how far and how hard the journey. Let’s sing of all those who, after they lived, left the world patently *not* the same.

When Alexander Graham Bell connected the concepts of electrical pulses and human voices, an era defined by land-roving couriers and telegraphic signals, by smoke patterns rising in the sky or pigeons strapped with messages — all of it ended. But the real leader may have been Theodore Vail, an unassuming man who looked much like the Wizard in the screen version of *The Wizard Of Oz*. A former Post Office manager, it was Vail who transformed the idea of telephony into universality: “a single, open telephone system that would connect with anyone, anywhere at any time.” It was Vail who cemented the army of people who once made AT&T a legendary organization all driven by “One Policy, One System, Universal Service.” Though deregulation and executive politics have made AT&T seem to be an endangered species, Vail’s vision is intact as other leaders today align themselves with efforts like today’s Project Iridium. The prospective idea of universal linkage of all humans, everywhere, endures.

For every “Louis Pasteur” whose name makes it into the popular tongue, thereby establishing his position of leadership, the history of medicine is populated by lesser-knowns whose ideas captured the world and never let it go. When William Harvey spoke of blood “circulating” in 1628, when Edward Jenner administered the first vaccination against smallpox in 1796 (within 30 years, an established practice worldwide), when Florence Nightingale defined the standards for “nursing” by defying the established practices in 1854, when Joseph Lister showed how an antiseptic can thwart infections that kill, when Karl Landsteiner in 1900 mobilized people to consider the importance of A, B, and O blood — thereby opening the window to reliable transfusions, when George Papanicolaou in 1928 asserted that a “smear test” could detect deadly cancers early, when Cicely Saunders opened the doors to St. Christopher’s as the first “hospice” in 1967 — when *all* of these pioneers and inventors became leaders by enthusiastically advocating their new ideas and resisting all setbacks to their visionary ideas, medicine was changed forever.

Though fame, fortune, and what is called “media presence” now dictates who is considered a “leader” in the arts, they are seldom a true litmus test. When Giuseppe Verdi’s *La Traviata* opened, it was at first a flop. It’s now reported to be the third most performed opera in the world. Verdi insisted on taking a contemporary subject (mistresses in society) and clothing the

performers in contemporary costumes. His lead tenor, Lodovico Graziani, came to the 1853 premiere with a hoarse voice; his baritone, Felice Varesi, felt slighted by the role assigned and played it

Though he was a prior box-office success, his *avant garde* ideas were resisted for more than a year.

slightly. “Last night was a fiasco,” Verdi wrote after the premiere. Though he was a prior box-office success, his *avant garde* ideas were resisted for more than a year. But Verdi’s idea that opera could be done in a modern style gave permission to all after him to write and produce in that vein, if desired. Perhaps Andrew Lloyd Webber’s controversial “rock operas” are direct descendents of Verdi’s leadership.

When the world was dominated by only two truly global papers with worldwide reach, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The International Herald Tribune*, Al Neuharth had dreams of something different, something of higher quality — something more appealing to the common man — than either newspaper. These newspapers are too specialized, too financial, thought the man who had climbed the journalistic ladder to become CEO of the Gannett Newspaper chain

after starting as a small-town, South Dakota editor of a sporting newspaper. And most existing local newspapers offered a poor alternative. Said Neuharth at the time: “You don’t have to be very damn intelligent or any genius to realize that there are a good number of [newspaper] markets that either have lousy morning newspapers or absolute rags.” Plucking four Gannett employees and locking them away in a small bungalow in Florida in 1979, Neuharth

For it is in rocking the established order that potential leaders are first discerned.

demanded deep research and imaginative thinking about “Project NN,” the tag given to the first thinking about a new National Newspaper, *USA Today*. With innovative use of color, a zippier balance of hard and happy news, simpler story structures, snappier graphics, Neuharth and his energetic team ultimately reshaped the world of news, in all media forms. Even the staid *New York Times* ultimately switched to using color photographs on its front page, a decision made almost 20 years after the advent of *USA Today*. Neuharth rocked the world of journalism permanently.

For it is in rocking the established order that potential leaders are first discerned.

It was Ed Roberts who led the world forward when he created the first commercially successful personal computer. In fact, Dr. Roberts (now an M.D.) gave an unknown teenager named Bill Gates his first job connected to writing software. When computers were thought to be high-priced and high-powered tools reserved for only the biggest corporations and the largest laboratories, *Popular Electronics* dared anyone to come up with a computer for under \$400. Overcoming what an associate called “a lot of effort before he got something that worked,” Roberts grabbed the idea with a vengeance, scavenging parts and buying minimal components. But if you look at the cover of the January 1975 issue of *Popular Electronics* — or if you have seen the version of the “Altair 8800” in *The Smithsonian*, you know how Roberts contributed to a revolution that will probably never end. In fact, his \$397.00 product back then utilized a specially-priced chip from a small company called Intel.

The CEO of Intel, Andrew Grove, was honored in 1997 with *TIME*’s “Man Of The Year” Award as well as *Industry Week*’s “Technology Leader Of The Year.” And it is hard to overlook the achievements of a man who guides a company which “makes nearly 90% of the planet’s PC microprocessors” and racked up \$5.1 billion in annual profits. But it is hard to overlook the early leaders of the PC revolution, leaders like Ed Roberts who literally “put it all

together” to take an idea and make something that rallies people to transform the face of the planet. Here’s how TIME’s Walter Isaacson described the phenomenon in his salute to Grove and Intel. Noting that Intel co-founder Gordon Moore once predicted that microchips would “double in power and halve in price every 18 months,” Isaacson says that Grove now believes that “[W]e will continually find new things for microchips to do that were scarcely imaginable a year or two earlier.” With 4 quadrillion transistors manufactured every month, Isaacson says (in the December 29, 1997-January 5, 1998, issue of TIME):

The dawn of a new millennium — which is the grandest measure we have of human time — permits us to think big about history. We can pause to notice what Grove calls, somewhat inelegantly, “strategic inflection points,” those moments when new circumstances alter the way the world works, as if the current of history goes through a transistor and our oscilloscopes blip. It can happen because of an invention (Gutenberg’s printing press in the 15th century), or an idea (individual liberty in the 18th century), or a technology (electricity in the 19th century) or a process (the assembly line early in this [the 20th] century).

But Isaacson overlooks the fact that all inventions, technologies, and processes

started first as ideas. Every big-selling automobile was first a concept car; and, before that, a engineering plan; and, before that, a set of drawings; and, before that, a sheaf of rough sketches; and, before that, an idea; and, before that, a figment.

The enthusiasm that drove Felix Hoffmann to work on a chemical formula we now know as “aspirin” was the same that fired the German company, Bayer, to

Searching resourcefully for an idea to make his mark in history...

manufacture and sell it, starting in 1897. Hoffmann’s father was desperate for some medical relief from rheumatism that wouldn’t corrode his stomach.

Maurice King taught chemistry in a high school in Manhattan during the 1930s. Searching resourcefully for an idea to make his mark in history, he was so imaginative that even his home bathtub would be used as a mixing laboratory because his factory lacked water. Annoyed that barbers at the time did not disinfect the combs they used to brush customers’ hair into shape, he struggled to develop and then sell the world on

Barbicide, which one newspaper recently saluted as “a product with such presence that it has become practically invisible.”

Jack M. Berry was no chemist, but he was a leader. Graduating from a Memphis high school in 1934, he bought a citrus business in 1942. Expanding the business by buying more and more orange groves, Berry and most other citrus barons did great until the big “killer freeze” in 1962, wiping out half of Florida’s crop. But adversity was viewed as an opportunity by Berry. He devised an ingenious approach to win by going in a whole new direction. The common wisdom of the time was that orange trees needed the highest Florida ground so they could drain properly and avoid root rot. “I know that,” Berry must have said to himself, “but there’s so much low land in Florida!” What he did next made history: he started to put in irrigation ditches in low-lying Florida fields planting orange trees on elevated beds between the ditches.

Working on a bet from two other friends, Berry agreed to take the meanest plot of Florida land they owned to test his thinking. On 6,000 acres, Berry’s crop thrived; his friends were so hope-less that they planted only a spartan sample. Other growers paid little attention to Berry’s ways, and even less respect. But when another big freeze hit the state hard in 1982, and when Berry’s crop was relatively untouched, his pioneering orange-growing technique became common practice.

You won’t find many audiences who can tell you what Jerome Lemelson ever did. But check the United States Patent Office and you’ll quickly have 500 of his ideas within your grasp. His many achievements seem to indicate that he may be second only to Thomas Edison for having the most patents. Don’t know him? Yes, you do. His “machine vision device,” or bar scanner made him so wealthy that he quickly decided that “inventing” should be supported. So he gave large amounts of his earnings to places like M.I.T., the Smithsonian, and (indirectly) many other universities. Rather than retire upon the profits he reaped, this leader sought to endow many, many others as his way of contributing to society.



Idea Climb

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But at the very heart of the enthusiasm, resourcefulness, resolve, and pay-society-back contributions of leaders around the world is the germ of a great idea, a new approach that will revolutionize the way people govern, stay well, think, produce, communicate, laugh, and get along with their fellow citizens of the world. Leadership is by no means relegated to the science laboratory or the business boardroom. One could argue that Frederick Law Olmsted did as much to influence our current view of the model city with his concept of the perfect park as Henry Ford did with his concept of automobiles as the basic mode of modern transportation.

In their day, leaders are usually singing way out of tune with the current times (or is it way beyond?), so their reputation could be rocky, even nonexistent. So when *The Economist* laments the demise of Westinghouse Electric as an industrial

In their day, leaders are usually singing way out of tune with the current times.

powerhouse (it now yearns to be a *media* powerhouse), when countless journals cover the ruminations of cost-and-people-cutter-without-peer Al Dunlap, when *Newsweek* reports that Microsoft

employees average \$1 million in option profits, when *Management Review* reports that a recent Robert Half survey showed that the majority of executives in corporations are worried most about losing their jobs because of a merger or hostile takeover, when Disney's chief, Michael Eisner, repeatedly (and only) makes headlines for the size of his compensation (the sale of his options during one week in December 1997 netted him \$500,000,000), when the United States Congress leans toward passing legislation that will make it harder for small-time innovators to keep the rights to their ingenious inventions, and when *The New York Times* holds up people as diverse as Bill Gates and Martha Stewart as "giga-egos," I now muse for a short while and then breathe deeply and easily. It may be that the famed comment attributed to Warren Bennis, that the world today is "overmanaged and underled" might be off the mark; more likely, the world is simply being held in place — and misled.

Fear not. Nature abhors a vacuum, one philosopher said; and the world seems to auto-generate the level of leadership it needs. If one is to be an earnest student of leadership, he or she must focus on the *true* leaders. *Edible tape?* Go ahead: place it up on the list of ideas that could grab our world by the lapels and shake it vigorously in the months and years ahead. Refrigerating things by using audio waves? Flashbaking food instead of microwaving it? Toothpicks that come with tiny brushes on one end? Three new

church movements, formed since the 1960s, gaining members dramatically while mainline churches flounder? Websites that allow you to “build your own compact disc” by selecting from thousands of different artists and selections? A car that runs on natural gas? Clothes “sculpted” to fit your body based on measurements from your doctor’s office?

All of these are quite possibly brazen ideas to challenge the status quo and throw some part of the world into deep

Think of it as a “tag team race to tomorrow.”

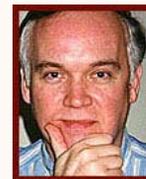
churn tomorrow. *Think of it as a “tag team race to tomorrow.”* Leaders look to past leaders to bring the world as far as it has come today; but they are adamant that the status quo will not stand, that mankind must not run in place, that the hand of man can enhance the gifts that nature offers.

I’m told by a company that brokers training and development programs to corporations with worldwide presence that, at the end of this century, the demand for leadership training has drastically waned. Right now, my source said, companies want classes that concern the daily to-do’s of running a

business. This observation potentially says much about our current world. Trodden by all the attention going to “leaders” who profess their achievements only by video clips and dollar signs, the world looks at leadership today and demurs.

But there is no subject more exciting, more captivating, more dramatic, or more instructive than mankind on the move, leaders climbing higher and higher with a new idea until they are ready to take on the world! Every leader comes with his or her own alarm clock to wake up those around them who choose to sleep. You may elect to ignore the subject, and let time “just roll on.” But your wake-up call will assuredly come. For the problem with leadership is that it’s always too late if your organization is without it.

To learn more about the author...



www.thomaslewisbrown.com/bio.pdf

about the artist, H.L. Mac Thornton...
www.mgeneral.com/4-ebook/97-other/040197li.htm

The Anatomy Of Fire

Chapter 5: **Illumination**

Greatness

Sparking A New Spirit Of Enterprise

Chaplet 5.3

By Tom Brown

- *[Martin Luther] King was 26 years old when he led the Montgomery boycott — I hadn't realized he was that young. I began to study the way he became the leader that he was, without ever holding an elective office. He was able to do it because he was thinking more eternally about what he was trying to accomplish.*

— Religious Activist and Politician
Ralph Reed
(1961 -)



It is, admittedly, preposterous. It is undoable, not really preferable, quite probably inimical to democratic capitalism. It is silly, unreasonable, a pipe dream if there ever was one. It is out of the realm of possibility, and it makes no sense. It can't be defended logically, which is why you'll only encounter the proposition in fiction, most usually science fiction. Yet, it's the best way to help you find leadership in the paths of life you walk.

"It," quite simply, is the fantasy that society could operate without the constraints of money. Suspend your disbelief that such an outrageous prospect could ever become reality just a few more minutes, long enough to absorb an important point. In a world without dollars, yen, rubles and pounds — in a world without credit and debit cards — in a world without financial statements and annual reports — in a world without assets and liabilities — in such a halcyon, if impractical, world, there would be no way to confuse economic prosperity with societal improvement.

Mansions would blur beside monasteries. Custom-tailored suits of the finest weave would fail to stand out. A Mercedes, a motorcycle, and a minivan would simply be alternate modes of transport. Calvin Klein jeans would be viewed more like Levi's. In sum, the status symbols of today would wash away, for there would be no way to *buy* status. There would be no way to assert oneself because of economic windfalls, financial savvy, or impudent legerdemain.

Leap fantastic with me just a bit further. Imagine all the "executives," by whatever title then called, in all the corporations in such a money-less world. Imagine their annual meetings at which time the executives have to face those who have an interest — in this phantasm, non-fiduciary interest — in the progress

For in a money-less world, a man could not create and thereby boast of great numbers; he would plainly have to be able to boast of doing great things.

of the firm. Since stock price, dividend checks, return on capital, price-to-earnings ratio, and executive salaries

would not exist to brag on, carp about, or try to conceal, it would be an auditorium full of people who assembled to ask questions quite different from the ones which are now asked at such get-togethers.

In such a scenario, I believe leaders (a la Thomas Jefferson's "meritocracy") would stand or fall based on one criterion. For in a money-less world, a man could not create and thereby boast of great numbers; he would plainly have to be able to boast of doing great things. Greatness would become the new coin of the realm.

One side is glowing praise, the other gritty perspiration.

Now this is no tirade against capitalism or wealth creation, or an attempt to paint the rich as tainted. Nor is this a faint-hearted effort to convince you that leaders do not think about the economic consequences, the monetary bonanzas, that can arrive synchronous with an idea that can change the world.

Instead, my huge "what if" is designed to focus on what I believe most leaders focus on: *doing great things*. If greatness were the coin of our worldly realm today, there would be a global shift of tectonic proportions. It would bring the mass of

mankind onto the playing field, which is very much an open field. The history of leadership is so dramatically clear that one cannot deny that many men and women of modest lineage have nonetheless left the world lofty legacies.

Most of us quickly forget, or never learn, that greatness is a coin with two distinct sides. One side is shiny, the other dull. One side is applause, the other aspiration. One side is glowing praise, the other gritty perspiration. One side is smooth success, the other is staccato stumbling. One side is glamour, and adulation, and quite-possible wealth; the other is worry and work and nagging doubts and steely will to move ahead no matter what.

If we list the leaders in our lifetime, those who brought us to higher levels of freedom or health or communication or productivity, it is deceptively easy to see only one side of their greatness. The empire that is now Disney was once just Walt Disney, a man so committed to a higher plane of cartooning that he risked all fame and fortune by insisting on screen effects that only layer upon layer (upon layer!) of celluloid could achieve in *Fantasia*. Animated hippos dancing to classical music may *still* not be your idea of a great movie, but it is the sign of a leader to go where few others dare — at the time. (Of course, *Fantasia* now looks like a product past its shelf life.) But Disney's need to search for new horizons in movie making rivals that of Sergei Eisenstein or Cecil B. DeMille. When success was far from certain, Disney

would not be stopped, nor deferred: he was going to do great things!

Sony is now a name so rooted in the mass mind that we consider it a synonym for electronic gear of the highest quality, built to last, and built for convenience and often maximum mobility. Sony's greatness eclipses the stories of Akio Morita humbly travelling from one big American corporation to another, trying to show that "Made In Japan" could mean so much more than it did a few decades back. One cannot imagine the ache and ouch that Morita, who ultimately rose to become Sony's chairman, must have felt when he turned down an order from Bulova to build thousands of radios with *their* name, not Sony's, on the front plate. He knew "Sony" would someday stand for something great, and so he literally could not afford to say yes to a big sale. It might have cost Sony its greatness.

In our household when I was growing up in the '50s, we did not get catalogs. I can recall, and at that only dimly, an occasional Sears or Montgomery Ward catalog; but these were twice the size of our local phone directory and seemed more like inventory lists rather than catalogs. Today, when L. L. Bean, Eddie Bauer, The Sharper Image, Lands' End, and countless other "big name" catalogers serve mainly as spacers for the countless video, photographic, software, and specialty catalogs (travel, music, office supplies) that inundate our mailbox, the name Lillian Vernon somewhat

fades into the background. But this emigrant from Nazi Germany saw the emerging shift in how many merchants would choose to sell. From her beginning as a part-time clerk at a candy store (she outsold all other employees), she quickly deduced that understanding the wants

It was the beginning of a journey that would lead to the start of her catalog business for "everyday" items....

and desires of buyers was *the* driver for any selling business. So, way back in 1951, she placed an ad for a monogrammed matching belt and handbag set. The cost of the ad? \$495.00. Each set only sold for \$5.58, including tax and shipping. This was risk. By the end of the year, she had orders for 6,450 gift sets. It was the beginning of a journey that would lead to the start of her catalog business for "everyday" items, which in 1997 accounted for \$240 million in revenue by processing 4.6 million orders. But money really isn't the point, is it, in terms of Lillian Vernon as leader? In her own words:

From the very first, I loved my work because it was mine, because I had created it. To this day, it thrills me

when I come up with an idea that pays off. Look at it this way: If your business stops making money, it stops breathing. But you don't live your life just to keep breathing. You live it for a sense of accomplishment, of satisfaction.

During the autumn of 1951, I knew I had accomplished something. I still felt overwhelmed and unprepared. I knew that if I were to achieve all I aimed for, I faced a long, challenging road.

Ted Turner is now a name that bespeaks vast success and vast wealth; CNN (now part of Time Warner) is the established force in broadcast news. But as Hank Whittemore chronicles the ascent of Turner in *CNN* (Little, Brown, 1990), he was no sure bet, no commercial slam dunk: "Conventional wisdom was that CNN would never get on the air at all; that if it somehow did get off the ground, it wouldn't last any more than six months; and that if (by some further miracle) it did survive longer, then Ted Turner would go bankrupt within a year." Ted Turner doing great things? Go back to 1980 when only 16 million homes were wired for cable and with CNN planning to spend \$30 million to do something great, and the comments of CBS news chief Bill Leonard do not seem as arrogant then as they do now: "Why would anybody choose to watch a patched-together news operation that's just starting, against an organization like

ours that's been going for fifty years and spends \$100-150 million a year?" Though Turner made headlines when he donated a billion dollars to charitable causes, his greatness was earned years before.

These, of course, are all stories of ordinary people who went on to do extraordinary things. In reality, every leader sparks a team of ordinary people who, combined, do extraordinary things.

These, of course, are all stories of ordinary people who went on to do extraordinary things.

As with all leaders, they are part of the "tag team to tomorrow" which I mentioned earlier. Whichever taproot area you pick, the names of the famous and not-so-famous who advanced human progress stand tall.

Matthew Brady is the pioneer photographer who helped to convince the world that this new medium was not just a communications breakthrough but was also a new way to express ideas and opinions. Many great photographers followed Brady and furthered the art, but you'll probably never encounter the name of John A. Knorr of Bayonne, New

Jersey. He applied for a patent in 1921 “to provide a film holder for [a] moving picture camera which may be readily attached when in use.” What Knorr was onto, though he didn’t realize it at the time, was the 35 mm. film cassette, which led to the development of the photographic world for all the rest of us.

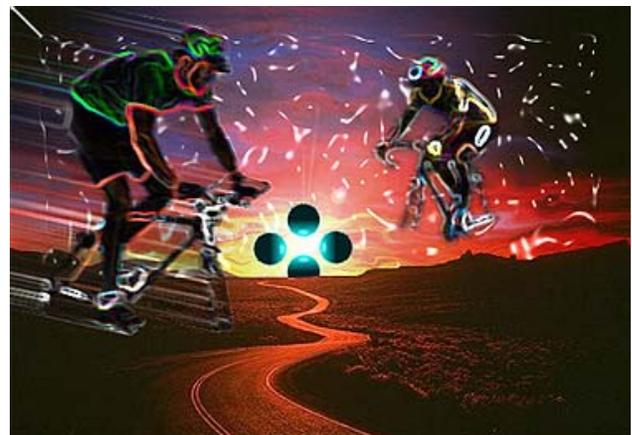
The Wright Brothers are often cited as the leaders who convinced enough people that airplane travel was do-able, affordable — and safe. Wilbur Wright was actually captivated by the idea from 1896. But, just 10 years later and a half world apart, Ferdinand von Zeppelin was furthering air travel by building “airships” which allowed people to travel in comfort while commuting vast distances (something we take for granted today). Don Burr of People Express Airline and Freddy Laker, both in the late ’70s and early ’80s, showed how air travel could essentially become ultra-affordable and accessible to the masses, much to the chagrin of the regulated air travel industry. But Herb Kelleher at Southwest Airlines seems to have more than comfortably picked up the baton, running an airline with gusto, spirit, and profitability.

Benjamin Franklin conceived of postal carriers to replace the private couriers whose existence was traceable back to medieval times. But it was two teenagers in Seattle in 1907 who, with just \$100.00, started United Parcel Service. Fred Smith arguably took the handoff from what UPS had built and, without

even the endorsement of his own business school professor, started Federal Express, making overnight delivery a standard in society.

And, even in government, the legacy of a leader can be discerned. The idea of federally-financed roads in the United States goes back to the Founding Fathers: John Quincy Adams put the weight of his presidency behind the idea of stitching together the disparate states with a network of roads. So, when in the 1950’s, Dwight Eisenhower sensed that it wasn’t just roads — but high- speed roads going fully north to south and coast to coast — that were needed, he, too, pushed for what has become the modern Interstate system.

Even in the field of money itself, leadership is driven more by ideas than by asset base. Go back to March 21, 1924: that’s when the first open-end mutual fund was established in the United States. The breakthrough was an extraordinary one. The Massachusetts



Headlights

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Investment Trust (MIT) relied on equities, not bonds, which were much more accepted investment tools. The Fund openly aired what its investments would be. And it allowed people to invest and redeem shares as if they were dealing with a bank. A restructured MIT exists to this day; it is now called Massachusetts Financial Services (MFS). Although historians of financial instruments say that MIT was unheeded for years by the general public, the demeanor of Charles H. Learoyd, L. Sherman Adams, and Ashton L. Carr (the first three trustees of the fund) was by all accounts supremely confident, bordering on casual.

But what they launched was a revolution in financial planning and management. The idea of investment portfolios for the masses, which has led to the myriad funds which now exist, has also led to the advent of firms like Charles Schwab Corporation. Schwab today allows virtually broker-less transactions in mutual funds as well as other financial products, but the concept was nonetheless started back in 1924 with a simple idea and the resolute will not to let the concept die. But keep this ever in mind: the big money at the time was not in the fledgling mutual fund industry. Learoyd, Sherman, and Carr started their fund during the era of Big Banking dominated by firms like J. P. Morgan. A company with vast holdings (one third of America's railroads, perhaps a fifth of all publicly-traded stocks, 70 percent of the steel industry, and a healthy hold on most banking transactions), J. P. Morgan

seemed invincible. This per Ron Chernow, whose *Death of The Banker* (Vintage, 1997) covers the decline and fall of the financial dynasties which ruled the world in the 1800s and early 1900s.

Even in the world of money *per se*, new ideas count for more.

So powerful and stuffy was J. P. Morgan that his headquarters offices at Broad and Wall in New York never posted a business sign, just the number “23.”

Chernow magically recounts how, even in the world of money *per se*, new ideas count for more:

To the tycoons of J. P. Morgan's day, it would have seemed an absurd pipedream, even a shameful comedown, to imagine that at some misty future time the cumulative savings of tens of millions of small Main Street investors would constitute the main pool of Wall Street capital.... Small investors have gone from being minor participants, eternal suckers of the stock market, to being the motive force behind rallies. As an atomized group, the “little people” could never have wielded this influence, but banded together in mutual funds, they have now inverted the whole hierarchy of Wall Street power.

Every endeavor ultimately viewed as a breakthrough can be tracked to a new leader picking up where some prior leader was forced to leave off. But the greatness that shines today belies the immense efforts required of leaders to achieve greatness. First, they must search for an idea that moves mankind forward. Then, they must evangelize others to the cause of the idea. Further, they must muster all available resources to establish the idea and keep it from dying. They must fight back when adversity tosses them challenges and roadblocks impossible to foresee. And they must, whatever the level of victory they achieve, recompense the many to whom they are in debt.

Greatness, then, is a coin with one side that can dazzle, even blind, by its intense brightness. Coca-Cola is a name that begets trembling today; in 1886, it was nothing more than John Pemberton trying new formulas in his backyard. Hewlett-Packard, without doubt a great company, was started with \$538.00 in 1938; its first

Disney was almost taken over as a company by hostile raiders who felt it could be less artistic and more profitable.

big customer was Walt Disney, who needed state-of-the-art sound for *Fantasia*. George Eastman got the \$5,000.00 investment he needed to start Kodak from Henry Alvah Strong, a buggy-whip manufacturer. One must invariably get behind the aura of today's greatness to learn the most valuable leadership lesson: that no leader inherits his or her leadership mantle. Greatness is impossible without an idea so compelling that it's worth the struggle to succeed — and without a leader willing to pull that idea into the future.

USA Today and CNN were lampooned by the established press and suffered great losses before any profit registered. Disney was almost taken over as a company by hostile raiders who felt it could be less artistic and more profitable. Thomas Watson, Jr., faced a storm of protest inside the IBM of 1956 when he advocated having all of its products switch to transistors, then a costly and not-that-reliable technology. “Singing the Bible” was a very debatable strategy for George Frederic Handel when he wrote *Messiah*, but we listen to it yet today. Just as Gene Roddenberry was starting to cultivate a fanatical following for *Star Trek*, the series was pulled by NBC. Fred Smith saw Fedex through many cash-starved days. Von Zeppelin saw airship after airship (the predecessor of the modern blimp) crash to bits, his personal fortune crashing with it. At one point, only unsolicited donations from those inspired by his fortitude and his dream kept his company going. Winston

Churchill marshaled the muscle of the free world to save democracy, only to be yanked from office. Decades later, Mikhail Gorbachev, Russia's modern "liberator," if there is one, would meet much the same fate. Akio Morita and Sony were duly proud of their U-matic and Beta tape players, but competitors with lower production costs (and therefore price advantages) of their VHS format forced Sony to retrench.

Although classical music seems today to be waning in popularity, there are few composers more accessible and easy to like than Hector Berlioz. He is also a leadership lesson for anyone in any field of endeavor. Here was a man who loved music but did not know how to play any instrument, a man who thought that the existing traditions in orchestrations completely missed the mark in terms of what music could be, who thought that a long musical composition would be strengthened by adding a repeating melody to "stitch" the music together, an *idée fixe*.

Berlioz asserted: why not tell stories via music? (Today, as any film score bears out, it was a darn good idea!). He further advanced: why not express a composer's emotions and feelings via the songline? And so Berlioz tossed out all rules; he proposed completely new standards for the music of his day. If you have never listened to his *Symphonie Fantastique* and been caught up in the swirl of emotions he graphically presents — from awestruck love to weltering punishment

— if you haven't heard the sound of a full orchestra simulating the gory work of a guillotine (literally: heads-rolling music!), then you really haven't given classical music a chance.

But it's not any one composition, alone, that earns for Berlioz the title of great leader. Harold C. Schonberg captures what Berlioz did — against convention and even against approval and acclaim for a long time. It was Berlioz, Schonberg catalogs in the *The Lives Of The Great Composers* (Norton, 1981), who:

- first developed what Europe in the early 1800s called "The Music Of The Future"
- created the first modern orchestra demonstrating that assembled musicians could produce "a new kind of tonal power, resource, and color"
- was first to express autobiography through music
- was first to provide a "story line" for a symphony, printed and distributed so the audience could "read" the notes being played on stage
- broke away from classical rules of harmony to "explore hitherto forbidden chord progressions and an entirely new kind of melody"

- argued that orchestras could be much larger in size (by 1825 he assembled one as large as 150 players) but his “dream orchestra” ran upwards to 467 — plus a chorus of 360
- lived most of his life without “direct followers” but who nonetheless shaped the musical philosophy of such giants as Liszt, Wagner, Mahler, and Strauss and all who followed them

We extol today, such as in the arena of light serious music, how George Gershwin progressively synthesized classical and jazz in *Rhapsody in Blue* — or, in rock music, how Elvis Presley was avant garde not just in his swiveling hips but in using a tight circle as a new artist-to-audience format, employing, for broadcast, hand-held television camera-men to capture the electricity between his singing and the audience reaction. But both of these greats were, in their own ways, indebted to Hector Berlioz. As Schonberg says in his recognition of both the triumphs and travails of Berlioz:

... Berlioz was the first of the young Turks, the wild men of music Almost singlehandedly he broke up the European musical establishment. After him, music would never be the same. And what he did, he did all by himself, impatiently brushing aside convention and the old way of doing things.

This cursory reading of leadership, commercial and otherwise, holds lessons for the leader-to-be. The leader’s art is in the leader’s heart. Take a person fixated on earning money, and more than likely his idea flow pales in contrast to the self-asserted significance of his cash flow.

Today we have a tendency to extol the manager who comes to the top of an organization ruthlessly slashing heads and costs simultaneously, “stabilizing” the business so it can be viewed as a good investment opportunity or a good economic engine to be sold.

Organizations around the world have been transmogrified into the American

The leader’s art is in the leader’s heart.

monster that social commentator Paul Erdman warned of a generation ago: “The entire essence of America is the hope to first make money — then make money with money — then make lots of money with lots of money.”

This is what many today call “tough-minded leadership.” It is not. This is nothing more than monetary manipulation, capital calisthenics, finance frenzy. Nor does the inappropriateness of using the word leader change when the manager in charge oozes charm. Leadership is not placeholding. Bereft of new ideas and the

abilities to nurture ideas into a force that churns, one placeholder manager is no different or better than another, save a smile here and there.

But leadership is not mystical magic either. Pick your discipline and name those you most admire as leaders, no matter the level of impact or fame, and you'll find that leaders invariably answer five questions the same way. Do you aspire to be a leader? Think hard on these:

1. Do you want to explore or to exploit?

Daniel Boorstin prefaces his salute to the world's *Discoverers* (Vintage, 1985) with these words: "The most promising words ever written on the maps of human knowledge are *terra incognita* — unknown territory." He reveals a fundamental truth about leaders, that they abhor the status quo, no matter how lucrative it might be in the present. Now is no friend of the leader. He searches endlessly for new ideas; he dreams to dream.

2. Do you want to rally or to rule?

As many executives have found, the isolated office — be it plush or spartan — is not where the work of leadership is best performed. Leadership is a contact sport. It demands a woman who compels herself to sell the idea in which she most believes. And her desire is not to make

each convert a follower; instead, she aspires to make each convert a new leader, percolating the idea to all those around. Her enthusiasm lights one match, which lights many more.

3. Do you want to imagine or to inventory?

An essayist once wrote that negotiating was "a serious act of the imagination." If so, leadership is imagination exalted. Because every new idea poses challenges or obstacles that baffle and sometimes

Leaders invariably answer five questions the same way.

block, the man who simply counts the reasons why something won't work or who recounts over and over the resources now at his disposal invariably misses the lightning leap which accounts for so many new thoughts blossoming into greatness.

4. Do you want to achieve or to comply?

What fires a leader's determination to press on even when a situation seems hopeless? It is the sheer will to achieve. Leaders split from placeholders in a fundamental way: they resist the allure and comfort of what's working now,

realizing that few aspects of the present endure for very long. Leaders, thus, are destineers more than engineers; their resilience is rooted in a firm belief that, as one computer scientist put it, the best way to predict the future is to invent it.

5. Do you want to give or to take?

Too often we think of leaders making contributions extracted from the largess attained when a new idea takes hold and enriches them fabulously. Though there are many examples of that, the deepest reaches of a leader's heart must harbor a desire to share the benefits of a new idea. Moving society further along (whether, at first, it wants to move or not!) is the ultimate derived joy from leadership. In the broadest possible context, leadership is an act of love, not acquisition.

Of course, a world without money is not going to happen, nor do I want to propose it. But should that fantasy ever occur, it would prove one point: it isn't that a world without money makes leadership possible. It's that a world transfixed on money makes leadership almost impossible. Money too often reflects present, not future, value. Money too often measures the risks of a new idea in limited ways. And, of course, money tends to feed an overarching sense of security, greed, or both. Leaders see money as a resource to be tapped into

and used judiciously to further a promising idea.

Gary Hamel and C. K. Prahalad, who wrote *Competing For The Future* (Harvard Business School Press, 1994), argue that executives need to pause from the pace and pressures of their status quo activities and to think about (even think up) the ideas that will drive businesses 10 years out, especially within their own industry.

They analogize that such activity is quintessential leadership and that it is akin to a car having sufficient headlight beams to help the driver see the future before it startles and perhaps stops the vehicle.

Hamel and Prahalad write with conviction and competence; theirs is a book chock full of stories about companies and leaders as legendary as I have proffered. But what's most memorable about the book, other than the headlight analogy, is how handicapped the "low beam" or "blind" executives are by their own hand. Who, I asked often when reading the book, put the handcuffs on leadership? One does not find in this book powerful forces pinning down organizational chiefs, preventing them from competing for the future.

The last line of their book is penetrating: "Finally, [this book] has been about making a difference as a manager by inventing new competitive space, by generating new wealth, and by building a

legacy that will outlast one's career.”
Leaders leave legacies; their journey is their mark.

It can strike you as a quaint if not an outdated concept to suggest that leaders — true leaders — live their life with a credo. The suggestion that anyone can afford to have a set of ideals, and choose to live by them, during a time of such utter chaos seems like a nice thought but wholly unrealistic. Yet, I would aver, strongly, that leaders *do* have a credo; it's an oath that they haven't necessarily committed to memory — nor do they recite each and every morning before coffee, bagels, and the newspaper are served up — nor could each and every leader write it down in a form that would duplicate what other leaders might proffer. Yes, deep down in leaders there resonates a credo that commits them to greatness. It looks and sounds something like this:

The Greatness Credo

With this day that has been given to me, I want to do something great.

And if I can't do something great, I want to do something that approaches greatness.

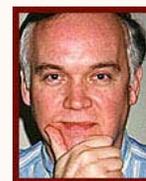
And, if even trying to do something great eludes me, I want to associate with people who are striving to do great things.

And, lest even that not be possible, I pray that I can live during times when others are doing great things, so that I can see and savor their striving, seeking, growing.

With the life that's left to me, I want to do something great. I will spend my days roaring like a fire, so alive that my whole being crackles from the choice I've made to go beyond dreaming and yearning: to use my time for living, working — ever questing, ever glowing.

Today, cries for leadership are pandemic. Surely you too have lamented the lack of leadership where you work or where you live. When you cry out for a leader, do you yearn for leadership somewhere outside of you? Or, just possibly, do you pine for the courage to tap into and release something real, something true, something that only resides deep down inside of you?

To learn more about the author...



www.thomaslewisbrown.com/bio.pdf

about the artist, H.L. Mac Thornton...
www.mgeneral.com/4-ebook/97-other/040197li.htm