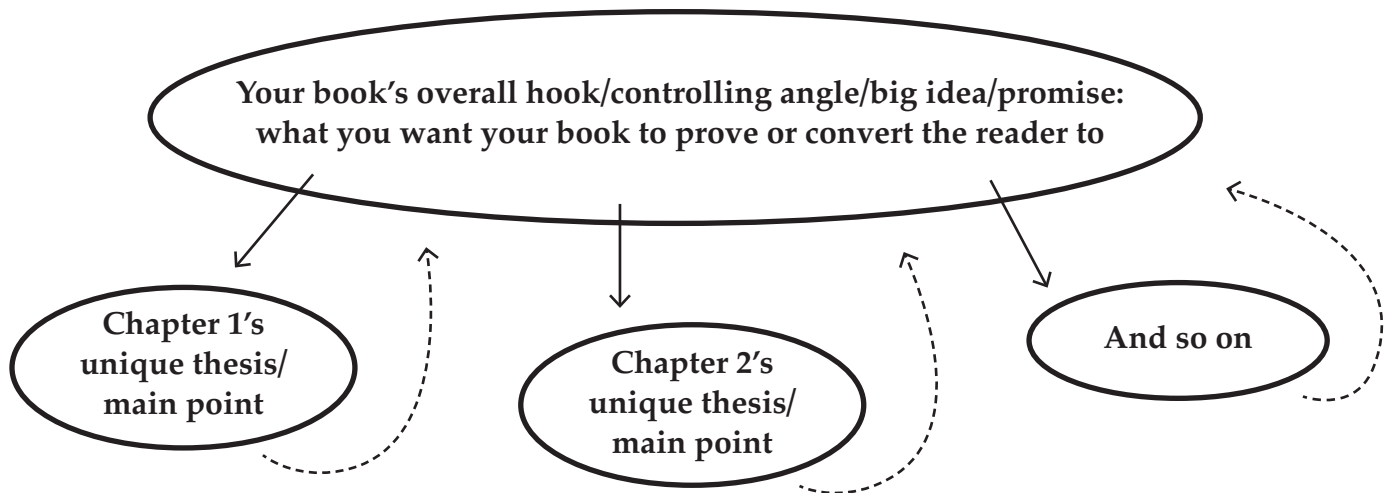


Organize Your Book: Five Quick Tips

Many nonfiction books ramble; don't have clearly developed, cohesive ideas that build from chapter to chapter; and leave the reader confused as to the main point of included stories or chapters overall. A confused reader won't buy your next offering, so to keep your ideas organized and on point, copy and customize the bubbles and sample outline below for each chapter you draft. Note below each bubble how that chapter's unique idea will also support your book's overall/central argument.

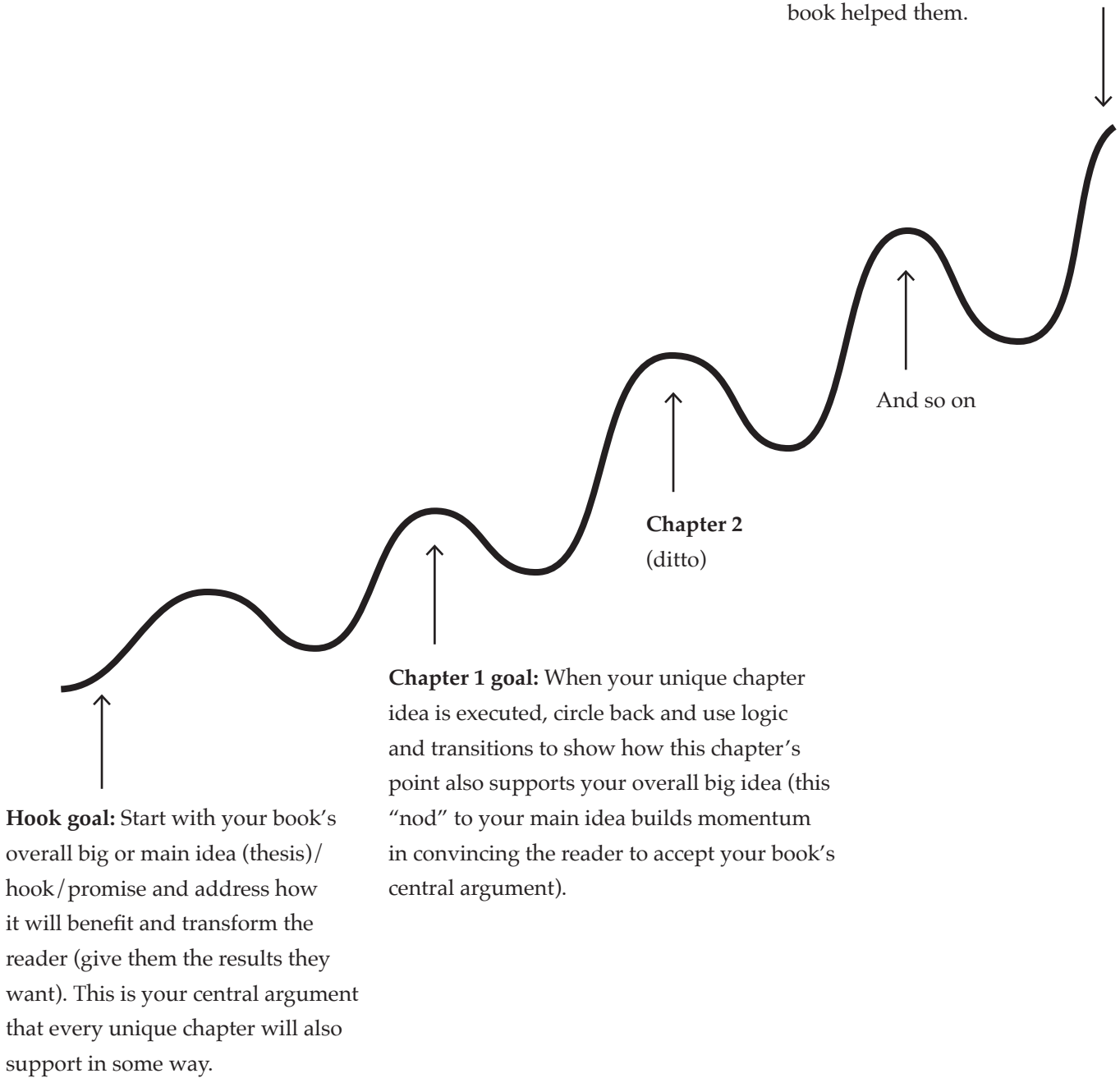


To outline (and develop) a well-organized chapter, try the following:

1. Provide a verbal "map" for the reader, summarizing what you're about to teach them; this helps them interpret their route through each chapter and stay tuned for what they should glean from it (editors call this step *tell 'em what you'll tell 'em*).
2. Execute the discussion (*tell 'em*) by using:
 - examples (note the ones you'll be using here on your outline)
 - anecdotes/stories (ditto)
(Make sure each story has a transition sentence making it clear how it illustrates the point you're trying to make.)
 - quotes, logic, application, jokes, principles, etc. (ditto)(Don't overdo this execution-of-the-idea section—less is often more with just one powerful story and/or quote and a couple of application principles. Too much text or too many ideas per chapter and the reader gets lost, feels you're going overkill, or starts skimming for "new" ideas. If your point hasn't changed but you keep providing evidence upon evidence, it will be redundant.)
3. Summarize what they learned ("*tell 'em what you told 'em*").
4. Make sure (if a how-to book, whether technical or principle based) that you give them a task or real-world example of where and how it applies so they can incorporate the principles in their lives right then—this makes it easier to remember.
5. In most cases, circle back with a transition sentence and connect each chapter's thesis to the overall book's main idea; this way the chapters will build in emotional and logical momentum toward convincing the reader of your big idea (see the graphic on the next page).

Note: You will not repeat your words/ideas exactly in steps 1, 2, and 3 as you "tell 'em," but will use alternate phrasing so that it feels fresh while really bringing the point home. Steps 1 and 3 will be brief descriptions (a paragraph or a few sentences) while step 2 is the full development of the idea.

Because you've built upward momentum in developing your book's main idea, the reader is converted to this idea and excited to share with others how your book helped them.





DON'T
JUST
MANAGE
LEAD!

BY ARTHUR F. COOMBS III

WHAT LEADERS COMMUNICATE

With this first sentence and throughout the opening paragraphs, you can easily see that the author is tying this chapter into the overall thesis of the book, which is that leaders don't just manage people, they lead them. This chapter talks about how important communication is in being an effective leader. The yellow highlight throughout the chapter shows where the author is telling them what he's telling them. The chapter ends on page 37, where he then tells them what he's told them about what and how leaders communicate and how that relates to the thesis of his book.

WHEN I THINK OF THE best examples of leaders—the ones I have read about, personally followed, or observed from afar—I realize that they all have a variety of outstanding skills. Some have great technical skills. Some have amazing organizational skills. Others can see, analyze, and understand numbers with uncanny ease and speed. But the one skill they all have in common is the ability to clearly and compellingly communicate their ideas and values to others.

So let's start at the beginning. If you want to become a better leader and not simply a better manager, the one skill I urge you to improve on *above all others* is the skill of communication.

This one skill—effective, dynamic, killer communication—will make you a better leader in every single aspect of your business: marketing, finance, manufacturing, sales, engineering, construction, or whatever else you may tackle. The ability to enthusiastically convey an idea, direction, and vision to others is not just important—it's *critical*. And this critical skill is the one skill that truly separates simple management from exceptional leadership.

You hear it all the time. Aspiring managers or vice presidents laser in on an esteemed business leader, and they want to know the key to that leader's success. They usually assume the answer is something like technological innovation, savvy marketing, or far-sighted financial planning. All of those things are important, of course, but the wannabe managers' or vice presidents' jaws drop when they find out what the answer really is.

The answer is simple. Great leaders understand the basics of their business *and know how to communicate those basics to their troops*. They inspire and motivate with humor, passion, and, at times, humbling vulnerability.

That's right. The one thread tying all effective leaders together is authentic, candid communication.

Close your eyes and think for a minute. Think of past leaders you have known. Really envision them. Bring their faces onto the movie screen in your mind. Now remember your interactions with those leaders. How did they motivate and inspire you? (I know they did, because great leaders always motivate and inspire.) I'm willing to bet that they did it through candid, compelling communication. I'm willing to bet *a lot* that they repeatedly, religiously, and relentlessly communicated their vision and how it fit into the big picture.

You know the real estate maxim: "Location, location, location." Well, leadership has just as simple an adage: "Communication, communication, communication." And guess what. That communication leads to inspiration, inspiration, inspiration.

One of my favorite sayings is, "We cannot NOT communicate." Everything we do, everything we say, everything we are about communicates something to someone. It's not limited to the things we say. We also communicate through the choices we make from the moment we wake up in the morning: what we decide to wear, how we wear it, what we drive, how we drive it, how we comb our hair (or don't comb it), even what we eat and how we eat it. EVERYTHING we do communicates something to someone! Communication isn't limited to the spoken word. Effective leaders tap into that reality and leverage it better than most.

Hopefully by now we all agree that powerful, effective, clear, articulate communication is key to becoming a better leader. It's critical to understand, too, that communication is the responsibility of the communicator. If the people you're communicating with don't get it, it's *your* fault, not theirs.

And that's a big responsibility.

So how do you become the kind of communicator who inspires your troops?

Let's not put the cart before the horse. Before we talk about *how* leaders communicate, let's explore the things about which good leaders communicate: values, vision, core principles, and change.

Values

Here we have supporting examples of what types of things should be at the top of the list where communication is concerned, things like communicating your values, your vision, the need for change, etc. The author also includes how-tos for each aspect of communicating.

Let's start out by examining a few world-class leaders. And let's start with one who is sure to put a smile on your face: Walt Disney. You know him as the iconic founder of Disneyland and the creator of some of your favorite cartoon characters, beginning with Mickey Mouse. More about Mickey later.

Walter "Walt" Elias Disney was born in Chicago to an Irish-Canadian father and a German-American mother. He was one of four boys and a girl who grew up in a modest home in Marceline, Missouri. It was a pretty ordinary beginning. Then he figured out early that his biggest passion was drawing, and he started selling pictures to neighbors and family friends at a young age. It was a precursor of things to come.

Disney took drawing and photography classes at McKinley High School in Chicago, where he was a contributing cartoonist for the school paper. At night, he took courses at the Chicago Art Institute. But at the tender age of sixteen he dropped out of school in an ill-fated attempt to join the army. The army rejected him because he was too young. So he went to plan B: he joined the Red Cross and went to France for a year, where he drove an ambulance transporting injured soldiers.

In 1919, Disney returned from France and settled in Kansas City, where he pursued a career as a newspaper artist. But something else happened along the way, as it often does. He and his buddy Fred Harman started making cartoons called Laugh-O-Grams, and they persuaded a local Kansas City theater to screen them. The cartoons became wildly popular, and buoyed by that initial success, Disney started his own studio.

He, Harman, and a handful of employees then produced a series of seven-minute fairy tales called *Alice in Cartoonland*—shorts that were filled with live action and animation. But before you decide

Disney's road to success was paved with nothing but gold, consider this: in three short years, his studio was burdened with crushing debt. Maybe he was a bit premature starting a studio based on that one Kansas City theater. Disney was forced to declare bankruptcy.

But, like all powerful leaders, he stood up, brushed himself off, swept out the debris, and started again. He and his brother Roy pooled their money, moved to Hollywood, grabbed a friend—also a professional cartoonist—and the three opened the Disney Brothers' Studio. Their first cartoon character was Oswald the Lucky Rabbit.

Oswald was almost an instant success (even though you've probably never heard of him). Again, there were some major bumps—okay, some catastrophic potholes—in the road to success. Through a series of sleazy deals, their New York distributor stole the rights to Oswald. That would have been bad enough, but he also stole most of Disney's employees.

Certainly *that* was fodder enough to give up. But not for Walt and his core team. Walt had been working on a new character—a goofy little mouse with huge ears and a squeaky voice. You know him as Mickey Mouse.

The first animated shorts featuring Mickey were silent films, but no distributors picked them up. They were duds. Was Walt ready to throw in the towel? By now, you know Walt wasn't the giving-up kind of guy. As soon as "talkies" came along, Mickey became the star of a sound-and-music short called *Steamboat Willie*. Walt himself was the voice of Mickey Mouse. The cartoon was an instant sensation, and today it's a classic. (In fact, chances are good you've seen it somewhere.) So is Mickey Mouse.

Next on board were Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, and Pluto. That wacky cast starred in Disney's Silly Symphonies. One of the cartoons in that series, *Flowers and Trees*, was the first animated short to be produced in color and the first to win an Oscar.

In 1933, Disney produced *The Three Little Pigs*. And talk about being a leader—the cartoon's title song, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" became a theme for the entire nation as it staggered through the deprivations of the Great Depression.

You're probably more familiar with Walt's films than with his early cartoons. In 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the first

full-length animated film, premiered in Los Angeles. In spite of the nation still being mired in the Depression, the film produced a staggering \$1,499 million and won a total of eight Oscars. Over the next five years, Disney released a string of full-length animated films—*Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, and *Bambi*—and opened a state-of-the-art studio in Burbank, California.

You're probably thinking it was all smooth sailing from then on. Think again. In 1941, Disney animators went on strike, and many of them subsequently resigned. It took years for the company to fully recover. But Walt kept plodding on. When television sets started popping up in suburbs across the nation, Disney brought the Mouseketeers into American homes on *The Mickey Mouse Club* and entertained families each Sunday night with *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*.

And he kept producing films. The last major film Walt Disney worked on himself was the motion picture *Mary Poppins*, which featured a combination of live action and animation. I'm sure you've seen that one.

Films aside, no one hears the name Walt Disney without thinking of his theme parks. Fueled on little more than dreams, Disney bought an orange grove in Southern California and launched his Disneyland theme park on July 17, 1955. Ronald Reagan cohosted the grand opening. Even that was marred by several mishaps, including the distribution of thousands of counterfeit invitations. No matter. Disneyland—now also in Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, not to mention Walt Disney World in Florida—became a favorite destination for families around the world.

One of the reasons the Disney legacy lives on is because its leaders—starting with Walt himself—established a set of core values and then communicated those values to every single employee who signed on the dotted line. Today, the more than 133,000 employees of Disney worldwide have no questions as to what the company stands for. And I'm certain that when you think of your experiences with a Disney product—whether it's a thrilling film flashing across the silver screen or a magical jaunt through *Pirates of the Caribbean* on your Disney vacation—you can relate to the company's values, summed up in this statement:

Each of our companies has a unique ability to harness the imagination in a way that inspires others, improves lives across the world and brings hope, laughter and smiles to those who need it most. Together as one team, we embrace the values that make The Walt Disney Company an extraordinary place to work.

Those values include innovation, quality, community, storytelling, optimism, and decency. Every employee knows those values and works doggedly to adhere to them because their leaders make *sure* they know those values.

Let's take a look at another legendary leader who built an equally legendary company—Ray Kroc, the mastermind behind McDonald's. Raymond Albert Kroc was born in Oak Park, Illinois. When he was fifteen, he lied about his age and joined the Red Cross as an ambulance driver during the war. (Sound familiar?) He wasn't as lucky as Walt Disney, though, when it came to seeing the world; the war ended before he finished his ambulance-driver training.

The ensuing years—quite a few, as it turned out—were really not too remarkable for Ray Kroc. In fact, they were nothing to get too excited about. He worked as a piano player, a paper-cup salesman, and a Multi Mixer salesman. Then came the day that changed his life (and, you might argue, the lives of millions of others). He visited a little restaurant in San Bernardino, California, whose owners had bought a few Multi Mixers. (They were like food processors or blenders, but made for heavy-duty commercial use.)

What he found was a small but successful restaurant owned by two brothers, Dick and Mac McDonald. Their menu was scant; they offered nothing more than a few basic burgers, fries, and beverages. By keeping their menu basic, they were able to focus on quality and quick service. Kroc was stunned by their brilliance.

Kroc thought it over and approached the brothers. They agreed with his idea of creating McDonald's restaurants all over the nation in a franchise operation. In 1955, Kroc launched his plan; by 1958, the chain had sold its one hundred millionth hamburger—far and above what would have happened had the brothers stayed in San Bernardino. In 1961, Kroc bought exclusive rights to the McDonald's

name—and *his* is the name now associated worldwide with the hamburger chain. (So long, Dick and Mac.)

People used to ask Kroc how he created a restaurant business and became an overnight success at the “advanced” age of fifty-two. In his typical style, Kroc responded, “I was an overnight success, all right, but thirty years is a long, long night.”

Kroc wanted to build a restaurant that would be famous for using uniform methods of preparation and serving food of consistent high quality. According to company history, he “wanted to serve burgers, buns, fries, and beverages that tasted the same in Alaska as they did in Alabama.” And if you’ve ever noshed at any of the more than thirty-six thousand McDonald’s restaurants in Argentina, Belarus, Costa Rica, Croatia, Fiji, France, Guyana, India, Latvia, Martinique, Moldova, Pakistan, Suriname, Sweden, Trinidad, or just around the corner from your house, you know he achieved that goal. It’s the place to go if you want to be sure of what you’re getting, even when you’re completely unfamiliar with the location. Today it’s the largest fast-food chain in the world, serving an estimated 69 million people every day.

Kroc used to tell his associates, “Luck is a dividend of sweat. The more you sweat, the luckier you get.” And his leadership style was flawless: “The quality of a leader,” he said, “is reflected in the standards they set for themselves.” Ray Kroc never hung up his apron to drift off into a leisurely retirement. Right up until the day he died in 1984 at the age of eighty-one, he worked for McDonald’s.

As the years went by, Ray added a few additional values to the two he founded the business on. Today, the restaurant’s value statement sums it all up: “From the start, we’ve been committed to doing the right thing. And we’ve got the policies, programs, and practices in place that allow us to use our size and scope to help make a difference. Because what’s good for us is good for all.”¹

The restaurant’s value statements expand on what today’s leaders believe is *good*: “Better food, more sustainable sourcing, happier people, a stronger community, and a healthier planet.” And Ray Kroc? He was good too. He made sure every McDonald’s employee—from the managers to the cooks to the people who mopped the floors and cleaned the tables—knew those values. And all 1.9

million people who work for McDonald's and its franchises today still know those values.

Values—they're what drive an organization. And a great leader will communicate them so that every employee from top to the bottom knows those values as well as his or her own name.

Leaders tap into all kinds of stories to emphasize what they value. Good leaders have a deep reservoir of stories, metaphors, and anecdotes at the tips of their tongues to help teach a principle or drive home a moral. Some are based on the experiences of others who have gone before; some are stories about well-known men and women, like the ones I've used here about Walt Disney and Ray Kroc; others are very personal. Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan, Vince Lombardi, Jon Wooden, Benjamin Franklin, and many more were masters of this means of motivation.

As a leader, that's how you should communicate. Use stories. The best are personal stories, stories about you and your experiences. They're the most powerful because they're *yours*, and you tell them with passion and poignancy. You'll be reading a lot of *my* personal stories as we continue this journey together. I have found storytelling a remarkably powerful teaching tool.

Vision

According to Webster's dictionary, a vision is "the act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be." A visionary is "a person of unusually keen foresight." A visionary leader is one who has a vision about what their organization (or family) would like to achieve or accomplish in the future. (It's important to remember that the "future" doesn't have to be so far away that you can't even imagine it. It can be tomorrow or next week or next month or next year.)

That vision serves as a solid influence for choosing current and future courses of action by everyone involved. And good leaders regularly communicate that vision to everyone involved.

I have a great example of the power of vision. My son Kai and I enjoy building things. One day when he was about nine, we were walking through Home Depot, and I asked him to stay with the cart

while I ran and grabbed an item on another aisle. When I came back, much to my surprise, Kai and the cart were gone.

I caught up to him a few aisles away. Kai had piled all sorts of supplies into the cart—screws, hinges, stain, and six-foot two-by-fours. I stared at the cart and then at Kai. Before I could say a word, he said, “Dad, I want to build something.”

“What do you want to build?”

“Dad, I want to build Mom a serving tray for Mother’s Day.”

I looked at the six-foot two-by-fours in the cart and could not help but chuckle at his choice of mundane, oversized lumber for the tray. He was so cute, so intense, and so focused.

I started restocking all of the items Kai had collected while explaining to him that before you buy the supplies, you first need to “build” the item in your mind. You have to be able to see it first. Then you draw it out on paper. Then, according to Kai’s grandpa Jake, you measure, remeasure, and remeasure again. Jake always said, “Better to make the mistake on paper than to spend lots of money and time on a mistake that could have been avoided with a remeasure.” You could say it was one of his mottos.

Finally, I told Kai that when you had something just the way you wanted it—in your mind *and* on paper—then, and *only* then, could you start buying supplies and building what you’d originally thought of.

I took the lesson a bit farther. “Kai, look around,” I said. “Everything you see was first created in someone’s mind. Someone drew it out on paper and then actually built it. That’s the case with everything in this store—this cart we are pushing, this huge building we are in, these shelves, this Coke machine, the shirt you are wearing, my phone, the pen in my hand. Everything you see follows this same pattern.”

I watched Kai carefully. I could see him processing what I had said while we finished our shopping.

The next morning, Kai brought me a drawing and six two-by-fours he had found in the garage. He handed me the drawing and said, “Dad, this is the tray I want to build for Mom.”

It was a simple drawing of a framed rectangle with four long rectangles next to each other on the inside. I knew he needed my

help at this point. To the best of his ability, he had done exactly what I had asked him to do. He had thought about it. He had created the tray in his mind. He had drawn it on paper. I'll admit that Kai is no draftsman, but he created it. I received the message he communicated to me loud and clear. I had to help him bring his creation to life.

Leaders typically become obsessed with their inspiration, much like Kai. They eat, sleep, and breathe it. I know that's how it works, because it's happened to me!

Just as Kai took his vision and physically created that wonderful serving tray for his mother, a leader creates an exceptional company, team, or product by first envisioning it. From there, they visually translate it to paper. Then they talk about it—communicate it to the people who will be involved. Then they get to work.

Great leaders have the ability to communicate their vision through their words, actions, and deeds: “This is what we are going to build, and this is how we will build it.”

I've been inspired by some great visionaries in my life. One was my father. His vision was “No empty chairs.” That vision for our home—a place where everyone was always welcome, where everyone was always included—set a tone of remarkable family unity I have tried to carry into my own family.

Another inspiration was Rosa Parks, a humble African-American from Montgomery, Alabama. I didn't know her personally, but the impact of her vision has profoundly changed my life as well as the lives of countless others. After a long day of work, Rosa lowered herself, exhausted, into a bus seat on the first row of the section reserved for Blacks. When a white person demanded she move to the back of the bus, Rosa refused. She was arrested and brutalized for her resistance. She was thrown in jail. Her friends, even after pooling their resources, did not have enough to pay her bail.

Her valiant stand eventually kicked off the Montgomery City bus strike and eventually the American civil rights movement. She may have been an underpaid, overworked maid, but her vision—communicated loud and clear that day on the bus—made her a vocal and effectual leader of a movement that changed lives.

Whenever I think of a person with that same kind of vision, I think of the sixteenth president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. By most accounts, he was an unlikely leader, born in a one-room log cabin on the Sinking Spring Farm in Hodgenville, Kentucky. Although he was largely self-educated, he managed to become a lawyer and did business as what he liked to call a “prairie lawyer,” handling every kind of case that would come before such an individual.

We’ve talked about the potholes in Disney’s road to success. We’ve talked about the thirty-year-long detour of Ray Kroc. Well, Lincoln trumps both of them—and just about everyone else I can think of. Along the way he lost several jobs, was defeated in a bid for the Illinois state legislature, and failed in business; he spent seventeen years single-handedly paying off the resulting debt when his former partner abandoned him. He suffered the death of his beloved fiancée, and when he proposed marriage to another young woman, she turned him down. He had a nervous breakdown.

He was defeated in an election as Illinois Speaker of the House, was defeated in a nomination bid for the US Congress, lost his re-election bid to Congress, and was rejected as a land officer. That’s not all. Lincoln was defeated in a US Senate election, in his nomination for vice president of the United States, and again in another US Senate election. And as if that wasn’t enough, on a personal level he suffered the loss of two young sons—three-year-old Eddie and twelve-year-old Willie. They were losses from which his wife never recovered.

Before he finally managed to win an election, he was a rail-splitter, boatman, manual laborer, store clerk, soldier, store owner, election clerk, postmaster, surveyor, and lawyer. But he never gave up. And in 1860, after all the defeats and failures he endured, he was elected president of the United States of America.

His first job as president was to appoint his cabinet. Most would choose to surround themselves with their friends. Their allies. Their closest associates. Not Lincoln. He gathered the men who had opposed him in the presidential election and appointed *them* to be his cabinet members. “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer,” so they say.

Abraham Lincoln moved into the White House in one of the darkest, most desperate periods of American history, and his presidency is marked by the vision that literally saved the nation. The United States owes its life to Abraham Lincoln's vision: provide equality for all, preserve the Union at all costs, and protect the Constitution.

Lincoln was passionate about his vision, and—at the peril of his own life—reminded people about it every time he opened his mouth. Not just once or twice, but *every* time.

Fast-forward almost four years to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. On the afternoon of Thursday, November 19, 1863, Lincoln stood on the battlefield of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where he was to dedicate the Soldiers' National Cemetery. It had been a scant four and a half months since the Union armies had defeated the Confederate troops on that very battlefield. The ground had been littered with the bodies of soldiers from both sides.

The speech was startling in its brevity but powerful in its sentiment. In just five succinct paragraphs, Lincoln communicated—as he always did—his passionate vision for the nation. He concluded,

We cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. . . .

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Lincoln was profoundly mistaken when he said, “The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here.” On June 1, 1865,

Senator Charles Sumner called the address a “monumental act,” and said, “The world noted at once what he said, and will never cease to remember it.”³ In fact, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address is one of the best-known speeches in American history. Its words are etched in the marble of the Lincoln Monument in Washington, DC, and countless numbers of elementary schoolchildren have memorized its stirring words.

Lincoln was a profoundly epic leader who boldly and consistently communicated his vision. His efforts to abolish slavery resulted in the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued on January 1, 1863. The measure prompted the Senate to pass the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which permanently outlawed slavery.

Fast-forward again, not quite so far this time, to Lincoln’s successful reelection. Weeks of wet weather preceded his second inauguration on Saturday, March 4, 1865; Pennsylvania Avenue had become a swamp of mud and standing water. Thousands of spectators stood in the thick mud at the Capitol grounds to hear what the president would say after years of civil war. Chief Justice Salmon Chase, one of Lincoln’s opponents in his first bid for president, administered the oath of office. In just over a month, Lincoln would be assassinated.

In his second inaugural address, his vision came through loud and clear in his concluding sentence: “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Those words also ended up engraved on the marble walls of the Lincoln Monument.

Now, more than 150 years later, no American can question Lincoln’s vision. It cost him his life, but it preserved those things for which he was most passionate—equality for all and a nation and Constitution he believed to be divinely inspired. Our nation has rested upon those principles because he consistently and fervently communicated that vision.

Core Principles

One of my favorite sayings goes, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

The author of that gem is one with whom you’re probably well acquainted: Albert Einstein. I sure wish *I’d* been the one to think of it because it’s so perfect in so many applications—including leadership. But I am no Einstein!

As a leader, you have a school of fish you hope will follow you. You want them to grasp the core principles of your business and take off with them. Well, guess what? **If that’s going to happen, *you* are the one who has to consistently communicate those core principles. Because if you don’t, you’re going to have a bunch of fish out trying to climb the nearest tree and believing they are stupid. No one—not even the smartest fish in the sea—can follow the core principles if he or she doesn’t know what they are.**

And if your people are going to know and understand your core principles, you have to communicate them. Not just once, not just a few times, but over and over and over. Just like you need to exercise and eat healthy foods every day to have a healthy lifestyle, you need to talk about your core principles every day. I’m always baffled by organizations that have an annual or semiannual team-building event. They use the meeting to talk about core principles, vision, and values. Everyone at the event gets jacked up and excited . . . only to go back to work the next day and fall into the same old routine. It works the same way with exercise: What if we decided to exercise just once or twice a year and call it good? How healthy would we be? It seems silly to even imagine such a thing—so why do some firms take this approach to core principles, vision, and values?

It’s not enough to hold an all-hands meeting, announce the principles, and send everyone back to their cubicles, assuming that everything is now good. Because it isn’t. You need to keep talking about your core principles until your people *can’t stop talking* about your core principles.

Your core principles are just that—*yours*. They’re different from mine and from Ray Kroc’s and from Walt Disney’s. But I would

suggest that certain core principles are universal regardless of your organization. These might include the quality of your product and service, consistent growth, and your dedication to customer service.

One core principle I strongly believe should exist in every organization and family is the importance of the individual (and that includes the employee, client, and family member). While I was working at RasterOps, a high-tech-hardware graphics firm based in Silicon Valley, I inherited a small, dysfunctional fulfillment-and-customer-service team. The team was located remotely, hundreds of miles from corporate headquarters. The manager I replaced was poor, to say the least, and I learned very quickly in some very graphic ways that most of the employees were struggling to get along with each other.

An astonishing amount of the complaints were mind-numbingly minor. Some employees didn't like the way others decorated their cubicles. Others didn't like a team member chewing gum at work. There were complaints of too much perfume or not enough deodorant. I was constantly hearing comments like "His work is sloppy," "She is lazy," and "He talks too loud." The list went on and on.

I recognize that these issues *seem* petty and trite, and *my perception* of these issues was that they were petty and trite, but the perception of those involved was different. To them, these seemingly petty issues were valid barriers to getting their work done. They didn't feel they were in a safe, happy work environment. Clearly evident in this situation was the axiom "We see the world not as it is but rather as we are."

By the time I'd been there a few weeks, things were a *little* better, but there were still many personalities that clashed. As a result, we struggled as a team. There was a general low sense of self-worth. We didn't see our team as great. We didn't believe we were good. We didn't think we were even mediocre. The team's self-image was so poor that the rest of the organization saw us that way. It was the bleakest of self-fulfilling prophecies.

I quickly realized that this small band of employees also had a low level of trust and respect for one another. It truly felt like a wet blanket had been thrown over the entire office, like a dark, heavy cloud loomed over our ability to do anything that was very good at all.

One day I pulled my small group of employees into an open area where we all could meet as a team. There were about a dozen of us. I asked them to bring their chairs and sit in a circle. They begrudgingly dragged their chairs to the middle of the room and formed a lopsided circle. Then they all sat down and glowered at me as if to say, *Now what?*

I heard a bit of indistinguishable mumbling going on. But I didn't need to hear a thing. I could tell by their expressions and body language what they were thinking: *Now what are we going to be told?*

I didn't say a word. I simply handed everyone an index card. Brows were furrowed, expressions lukewarm. One man finally spoke up and asked, "Aw, dang! Do we have to write something?" He pulled himself from his chair and shuffled toward his desk to get a pen. I ignored his obvious resistant attitude.

"Yes," I said. "We are going to write something. Everyone needs to get a pen, and I want each of you to write ten positive character traits about the person to your left." Eyes rolled. Jaw muscles rippled. And everyone just sat there. No one did a thing. I quietly observed for the next few moments.

Then I repeated myself. "Look at the person to your left," I said a little more forcefully this time. "I want you to think of ten positive attributes about that person. Number the traits one through ten and write them on the card you have in your hand."

You would have thought I had asked for a written explanation of quantum physics. It seemed to be a real challenge for most in the room. They felt vulnerable. It was a little scary. They had been so fixated on each other's weaknesses that this sudden shift was initially very difficult. They just sat there, awkwardly glancing at each other. I could tell the exercise was going to push them out of their comfort zones and that they did not like being pushed.

I find it interesting that some get so comfortable pointing out the weaknesses of others that it becomes a normal way of life. It's their place of comfort and peace. It's such a habit that they become truly proficient at tearing down and criticizing others. I personally believe such behavior stems from their own low self-esteem. In order for them to look and feel good about themselves, they have to belittle and tear others down. It's a ruthless way to elevate themselves.

Back to my little circle of uncomfortable employees. Once they realized I was serious, they got to work. When it was clear that all of them had finished, I dropped the bombshell: each had to read his or her list out loud.

The room became deathly quiet. If they thought they were vulnerable making the list, we'd just taken vulnerability to the next level. This was going to really stretch many of them.

I could only imagine all the colorful, descriptive words being silently hurled my direction. But they soon realized that, once again, I was serious.

The first few people who stood to read their lists were quiet and timid. I could tell how blisteringly uncomfortable they were. But once the ice had been broken by a few, the solemn, cynical mood started to shift. Voices became stronger. Some even sounded cheerful. Faces brightened. Eyes literally lit up. Even body language dramatically shifted. At first they were leaning back, arms tightly folded over their chests. Now they were leaning forward on the edge of their chairs, arms, chests, eyes, hearts, and minds truly engaged and open to the things being said.

“I think you are smart.”

“You are always on time.”

“I admire how you love your family.”

“I like your car.”

“I respect your ability to calm irate callers.”

“You are honest.”

“I am jealous of your hair.”

“You are a great dad.”

“You are brave. I admire how you tackle life's curveballs.”

As each person finished, we moved to the next. Each employee took a turn to openly, honestly, and publicly share positive thoughts and opinions about someone else on the team. You should have seen the smiling faces as each person listened to the positive affirmations being read about him or her.

The responses were amazing. Most of the comments were along the lines of, “Wow, I had no idea you thought that way,” “I thought you hated me,” and “That is the nicest thing anyone has ever told me.”

Some were so moved by what was said that they got emotional and started to tear up.

As we broke out of the meeting, I asked each to give his or her list to the colleague he or she had written about. The rest of that day was a choice experience. Many hung those lists on their cubicle walls. I noticed most of my team members looking at their lists over and over. As we went about our day, there were healthier handshakes and even a few hugs. The vibe in the office had definitely taken a turn for the better.

The mood in the office began to shift from that time on. It seemed everyone was much more sensitive and patient with each other. They were slow to judge, slow to criticize, and slow to condemn. I found them more willing to help one another. The office interaction went from negative criticism to positive communication and cooperation. There were no more fish being judged on their ability to climb trees.

Just like those tree-climbing fish, society often tells us we are not enough. We are not smart enough. We are not tall enough. We are not pretty enough, thin enough, fast enough, strong enough. Enough, enough, ENOUGH! When we pile our own negative perceptions and feelings for others on top of what society is telling us, we are creating a self-fulfilling prophecy that will most definitely come to pass. We not only rip and tear down others, but in the process we tear ourselves down. Attacking others and pointing out their weaknesses is a reflection of how we see the world and ourselves. Let me repeat that one more time. Attacking others and pointing out their weaknesses is a reflection of how we see the world and ourselves. The faults we see in others are usually our own.

As a youth, I had my own “not enoughs.” As a father, I have seen all four of my kids wrestle with their own unique “not enoughs.” So about fifteen years ago I decided to do something about it. I took action. I wanted to paint an image of how I saw my children. I wanted them to see themselves through my perspective.

As parents, we have a unique—and, dare I say, sacred—ability to see our children not only as they are but also as they can become. We can take a step back and, with parental perspective, see their true

potential. I wanted my kids to see *that* image—the image *I* saw in them—not the image the school bully, the smart aleck, or the mean girl were seeing. I wanted to paint a vision of who they were, along with the limitless potential they possessed.

With that, my poster project was born.

I fashioned a large, sturdy poster for each of my kids. For each, I wrote a sentence filled with adjectives, each in a different size and font so the poster would be fun and visually stimulating. Between the words I randomly placed pictures of that child in a positive light.

Kai's was especially important because he has sensory-perception disorder and there are a lot of things he can't do that others his age take for granted. For example, he can't tie his shoes. He can't play kickball. I would say he is the last to be chosen when kids are picking teams on the playground, but that wouldn't be true. Kai does not even allow himself to face this humiliation. He eliminates himself before the ritual of cherry-picking begins. And he's bullied as a result. So here's what I put on Kai's poster:

Kai, you are: Active, Amusing, Answerable, Authentic, Awesome, Bold, Brave, Bubbly, Capable, Caring, Charitable, Confident, Courageous, Charismatic, Clever, Christian, Creative, Curious, Courteous, Dependable, Determined, Distinct, Dynamic, Energetic, Enthusiastic, Empathetic, Exceptional, Eternal, Fascinating, Fast, Feisty, Flexible, Friendly, Focused, Forbearing, Forceful, Fun, Good-Looking, Gutsy, Happy, Handsome, Hardworking, Healthy, Helpful, Holy, Honest, Honorable, Humble, Imaginative, Important, Interesting, Intelligent, Introspective, Joyful, Just, Kind, Leading, Likable, Lively, Loyal, Magical, Majestic, Merciful, Modest, Motivated, Memorable, Natural, Nice, Noble, Noticeable, Obedient, Open-Minded, Optimistic, Original, Persistent, Persuasive, Physical, Positive, Powerful, Precious, Proud, Productive, Quick, Quirky, Real, Realistic, Reliable, Resourceful, Reverent, Royal, Sacred, Sharp, Smart, Responsible, Spiritual, Strong, Surprising, Sympathetic, Thoughtful, Tolerant, True, Trustworthy, Unique, Unpretentious, Unselfish, Unshakable, Upbeat, Upright, Utilitarian,

Valuable, Versatile, Vigorous, Warm, Wise, Wonderful, Young, Yourself, Xtra-special and Zany. More importantly . . . I LOVE you just the way you are!

There you have it: 120 positive adjectives, in alphabetical order, that I truly believe describe my son Kai. Each of my children proudly hung these posters in his or her room; to each, the poster is a priceless document.

When it's time for them to go to bed, I have them pick out one word from their poster. I sit on their bed and give them an example of why I *know* that word applies to them. Kai will say, "Dad, the word tonight is *productive*. How am I productive?"

I go on to tell Kai a true story in which he is the main character and in which the word *productive* applies to him. "Kai, remember when I asked you to help me clean the garage, and you willingly vacuumed the garage floor?"

"Yes."

"Well, that was you living and breathing productivity. That was you being productive." Then I always tell him how much I love him and what an amazing leader he is growing into.

I never want my children's last thoughts of the day to be thoughts of discouragement. I never want them thinking as they fall asleep that they are not enough. I want them focused on the truth—that they are wonderful, capable individuals destined to do many great things.

I felt I needed to step in and consistently remind them of their infinite worth. If *I* didn't, who would? Their friends on the playground? Not likely. Especially not the ones bullying a sweet little boy because he couldn't tie his shoes. No, I had to take control instead of leaving it in the hands of others.

Don't think this important task is limited to the home. In each of our organizations, we have people who believe they are not smart enough, not good enough, just not enough. Great leaders find ways to build self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence, and dignity in their teams and in the individuals who make up those teams.

If each individual does not have a healthy sense of self-worth, they will carry that negativity into the team. There is no room for

self-doubt while dreaming great dreams and striving to accomplish great visions.

A leader must stay positive and keep his or her troops focused on their strengths, not their weaknesses. A leader is able to envision each individual accomplishing many great things. No great accomplishment has ever been achieved through mediocre effort born of self-doubt.

Change

The final thing about which leaders must communicate is change. Managers are satisfied with the status quo. Leaders invoke change.

Think about that for a minute. No one wants to follow status quo. People inherently follow the person who wants change. Nowhere is that more apparent than in an election for public office: the candidate who garners the greatest following is the one who promises change.

As a leader “be the change that you wish to see in the world.”⁴

Those timeless words were uttered by Mohandas Gandhi—affectionately known as Mahatma—a tiny man with wire-rimmed glasses who dressed in robes and came from the inconsequential province of Gujarat, India, an area suffering from extreme poverty and famine. It was hardly the kind of area one would expect to produce a person who would impact the world. Looking at Mahatma, no one would suspect that he was a powerful leader, but he was. And his power came from his ability to inspire change.

Gandhi got his start in politics as a lawyer in South Africa. Like other influential leaders, he had a compelling vision: to improve the station of the lower classes, to help in his nation’s struggle for civil rights, and to help his country gain independence from Great Britain.

He was known for his nonviolent methods of protest. His campaign, first begun in the early 1920s, urged his countrymen to boycott British goods and traditions. It was slow going at first, but the movement gained momentum. Mahatma is perhaps best known for his 1930 protest, where he led thousands of Indians on a 250-mile march to a coastal town where they started producing salt—a commodity on which the British had enjoyed a monopoly.

He cared about people, and he dedicated himself to changing the conditions in schools, in hospitals, and on farms. Each time he was arrested for his efforts—and those arrests were many—he fasted, believing his death from starvation would embarrass the British sufficiently to bring about independence.

That independence finally came in 1947, when Gandhi was seventy-eight. Ironically, this proponent of nonviolence was assassinated the next year as he walked to his evening prayer meeting. Twenty years later, he had a profound impact on the United States when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. adopted his peaceful, nonviolent form of protest to bring about civil rights in America. Because of Gandhi's dedication to change, he is considered one of the twentieth century's most important leaders. In India, he is revered as the father of the nation.

He's not alone when it comes to people who emerged from obscurity to spearhead the kind of change that made them remarkable leaders. Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the Madiba clan—hardly a household word—in the tiny village of Mvezo, Transkei. When he was in primary school, his teacher gave him the name Nelson, following the custom of giving all school children Christian names.

His desire for change came at an early age. Hearing the village elders tell stories of their ancestors' valor during wars of resistance, he dreamed of contributing to the struggle of his people to gain freedom. It was a dream that would change the world.

Things were not easy along the way. The university he was attending expelled him because he joined a student protest. When the king found out about his participation, he was furious, and Mandela was forced to flee to Johannesburg. He subsequently enrolled in several universities but was not able to graduate from any of them.

His first child died in infancy. He and his wife divorced. When he engaged in civil disobedience against communism, he was sentenced to nine months of hard labor.

But Mandela was determined. He eventually completed his law degree, and with that finally in hand, he entered politics and fought against segregation and apartheid in South Africa. His efforts for change resulted in a conviction of sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the government. He was sentenced to life in prison but

was released twenty-seven years later when an international group successfully lobbied for his freedom. He was subsequently elected as the first black president of South Africa.

Over the course of his life, Nelson Mandela received more than 250 honors and awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. His remarkable leadership came because of his desire to implement change.

Closer to home we have Steve Jobs, the iconic founder of Apple Computers. Steve didn't start out as a slam-dunk leadership type. He was placed for adoption at birth. His biological father was a Muslim activist who spent time in jail for his political activities. His adoptive father was covered in tattoos (*before* tattoos were popular), dropped out of high school, left his Wisconsin farm, and bounced around the Midwest looking for jobs, eventually marrying a girl he'd met on a blind date in San Francisco. (They were engaged ten days later). His hobby was working on cars; his vocation was repossessing property for which people had fallen behind on payments, something that suited his tough personality.

His birth mother, forbidden from marrying her Muslim boyfriend because she was Syrian, fled to San Francisco to have her baby. She had picked out a Catholic, well-educated, affluent adoptive couple for him—but it turns out they were looking for a girl. Instead, the agency placed the baby with a blue-collar couple, neither of whom had a college education. She agreed to sign the adoption papers only after the couple promised her baby would attend college.

And so it was that Paul and Clara Jobs raised Steve. He was a difficult child. His mother often wanted to give him back. Nonetheless, Jobs said he felt pampered and indulged by the couple, whom he deeply loved throughout his life. In fact, he got terribly upset when people referred to the couple as his adoptive parents. He claimed they were his parents, 1,000 percent, and that his biological parents were nothing more than his “sperm and egg bank.” He later maintained how grateful he was to his birth mother that he didn't end up an abortion. Years later, he met his birth mother and enjoyed a warm relationship with her until his death in 2011 from pancreatic cancer.

Like many great leaders, Steve Jobs didn't have the easiest go of it. He was bullied in school and was considered to be a loner. The kids

in junior high thought he was odd. While he had problems making friends with kids his own age, he befriended many of the engineers who lived in their Silicon Valley neighborhood. He grew his hair long, started hanging out with college-age guys, and discovered marijuana.

But true to his birth mother's wishes, he did go to college. And through a fortuitous series of events, he started working on developing video games with a friend of his. The people who bought the game and worked with Jobs described him as "difficult," saying he was clearly the brightest guy in the room but also let everybody know it.

One thing led to another. For a time after college, he lived in a cabin in Los Gatos, California, and practiced a form of meditation. That led him to India, where he sought spiritual enlightenment, and eventually back to the United States, where he worked on a communal farm in Oregon.

He eventually ended up back at his parents' home, where he converted the toolshed in their backyard into living quarters with a sleeping bag, mat, candle, meditation pillow, and some books. That toolshed at his parents' home was where he built the first Apple computer. And it was from there that he greeted his fledgling customers and clients, barefoot and with his underwear hanging out (before *that* was popular too). Most of them regarded him as a hippie.

Steve Jobs had *some* of the qualities of a good leader, most notably his dedication to change. Simply, he wanted to change the way the world did business. And change it he did. He invented a computer designed to be used by individuals; every personal computer used in the world today evolved from Steve Jobs's original prototype, fashioned in his parents' garage.

And there's more. Steve Jobs made computers simple to use. His computers—the now widely used Mac—were easier to navigate, froze less, crashed less, resisted viruses, and were intuitive. He turned technology into art, inventing products that combined power and functionality with a stream of products that were aesthetically pleasing. Finally, he shattered the boundaries of what a computer could do and designed products that connected every aspect of a person's life. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor said, "There is not a day that goes by, and often not an hour, that a Steve

Jobs invention does not better my family's life."⁵ Think about the way we talk on the phone, how we listen to music, how we navigate unfamiliar cities with GPS. The list goes on and on. Steve Jobs literally changed the world.

Do I consider Steve Jobs a great leader? No. Steve Jobs created an amazing company. His products literally changed the world. I use, and love, many of his inventions. He was, unquestionably, a shrewd executive. Yet, by my definition of a leader, he does not fit the bill. Steve Jobs could be extremely rude, uncompromising, and demanding of his employees. On one occasion, he was terminating some employees at Pixar. He was asked if those who were losing their jobs should be given two weeks' notice. Mr. Jobs replied, "Okay, but the notice is retroactive from two weeks ago."

Did Steve Jobs lead or manage? Remember, you're still in chapter one. You're just starting to identify what makes a great leader. Someone can affect the entire world, but if they don't have some of the other important qualities of a leader—which you'll learn more about later—change alone, values alone, vision alone does not make a person a leader.

That's it. Leaders don't talk about people. They communicate about values, vision, core principles, and change. They don't try to measure those things because they can't be measured. After all, how do you measure an attribute like passion?

Leadership is an art. You may be able to measure the *results* of good leadership, but you can never measure the leadership itself. There is no quantitative test you can give college students to predict which ones will emerge as leaders. Look at some of the people we've discussed in this chapter—no one would have predicted that the world's greatest leaders would have been born in a famine-infested slum in India, suffered a discouraging number of failures in life, or lost everything several times over and finally made bank on the strength of a cartoon mouse. But they were. And they did.

So don't worry about where your life has taken you so far. Don't worry about where you were born or whether you were picked for the kickball team. Don't worry about the grades you got in high school or the fact that some of the stuff you tried didn't work out.

Tying into the book's overall thesis here.

The author does a fantastic job of telling readers what he's already told them, summing up not only what this chapter is about but also relating it to the premise of the book in the next few paragraphs.

Focus on the here and now. Focus on the things you can do. And no matter what, focus on your values, your vision, your core principles, and your desire for change. It's what you and other commanding leaders have in common.