

# **THE CENTURION PRINCIPLES**

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## Introduction

### THE OATH OF A CENTURION

A BATTLE-HARDENED LEGIONNAIRE was promoted to the rank of Centurion based on at least sixteen years of combat service and valor at the point of the spear. He was able to carry ninety pounds of equipment at least twenty miles per day and train under the harshest of conditions. **The Centurion was required to equip himself at his own expense.**

Death was the penalty for fleeing during battle or feigning illness to avoid battle. Minor offenses were often punished by the loss of a body part.

To rise to Centurion was considered the highest honor a legionnaire could attain. The Centurion always led his troops from the front.

#### **The Oath of a Centurion: “STRENGTH AND HONOR”**

**As a nation, we have lost our way and we know it.**

**Now more than ever, America is in need of leadership that guides by what is right rather than what is popular;** what is honorable rather than what is legal; what is self-sacrificial rather than what is merely self-serving. We (need) strong, virtuous leaders whom we will not be ashamed to call our own.

**We live in an age where “image is everything.” In leadership, this model has produced empty shells.**

Hollow leadership cannot long be hidden.

**Leadership by deceptive and sordid means brings only sorrowful and shameful ends.** Great leaders rise above their peers—like those in history who went beyond the call of duty and still inspire us today.

The Centurion was a leader who earned his promotion by proving himself in battle for nearly two decades. He rose from the ranks of one hundred men through mental and physical toughness and

self-sacrifice. **There were no “positional” Centurions, men appointed for political reasons or cash contribution.** Centurions led their troops from the front—from the pointed end of the spear in position, character, and valor.

“Strength” incorporates wisdom, vision, and unrelenting commitment to excellence. **“Honor” encompasses the virtues of integrity and honesty, self-denial, loyalty, and a servant’s humility to those in authority above as well as a just and merciful heart to those below.**

Timeless leadership principles have proven true under fire, where life and death were but a breath apart. **Leaders come in all shapes and sizes**—men and women—and **the world is critically short of Centurion leaders.**

What you must decide is whether you will lead like a Centurion.

Principles are often forgotten in the heat of the battle.

This is not a book for those seeking ten quick ways to succeed in leadership without really trying. Instead, it is a collection of narratives of Centurions in crisis, Centurions holding fast to strength, honor, and virtue while at the point of the spear. **Life-changing lessons are best absorbed through observation rather than instruction.**

This book is written in memory of those who have led like Centurions and for you who soon will. **Centurions are not easily forgotten. They leave a legacy without trying to do so.**

**This world needs Centurions who are strong in both their competence and their character.**

I invite you to lead like a Centurion. “Strength and Honor.”

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **HANNIBAL** **Champion of Carthage**

**Great leaders don’t think outside the box—they bury the box. And then they make darn sure none of their followers are tempted to dig it up again.**

MOST BOOKS IN THIS GENRE START-OUT WITH THE PREMISE that everyone can be a leader. I don’t think that is true, and I believe the plethora of sorry leadership examples in corporate America bear this out. **Of those leaders who are fitted to their calling, very few are**

**willing or able to become Centurions.** The weight of the leader’s mantle weighs too heavily on most shoulders to be born aptly of for long. **So it is not uncommon then for many to settle for “managing” situations rather than rising to leadership.”**

Too many leaders focus upon the trappings, rather than the substance of their office, lacking a moral compass, and willing to sink to any level to reach their ends. They leave no positive memory of their tenure, much less a legacy to follow.

Centurions have no illusions of such trappings but gather the courage and will to set out through dark forests and dangerous waters, while inspiring others to follow them. Test your mettle, your limitations, and your heart.

**It takes a courageous heart, an adventurous spirit, a quick mind, and a visionary soul to become a Centurion.**

**Begin by deciding whether you want to be such a leader.** **You will discover that your toughest foe to overcome is not the enemy before you but rather the enemy within you.** It is what people know about themselves that ultimately defeats them. It is also what makes them afraid. That is why we begin with the box. Defined. Confined. Safe. Comfortable. Approved.

**Go outside the box? You’re on your own. Unlimited risk. Job security—zero. A place littered with failure. On your own and unapproved. No known road maps. Potential? Achieve what all before you thought was impossible.**

When you look at the risk and potential, is it any wonder so few are willing to go outside the box?

“The first rule of the Harvard Business School is: break all the rules.”

**The barriers you face today may appear to be insurmountable. But it may just be that you’ve been searching within a small, safe “box” for solutions, when they don’t exist there.** Until you are willing to cross the line to “where sea monsters live,” you will just “manage” the situation.

Hannibal’s challenge was to find solutions to barriers—the same as any leader today. The soon-to-be great Carthaginian general had to find a way to bring the war home to the empire of Rome. To this point, the war was a distant news event for the Romans as Hannibal rampaged far away in Spain. Rome felt safe behind the Alps to the north and with a strong navy protecting the eastern and western shores. Hannibal was devising a plan to penetrate formidable Rome by doing something no army had ever done since Hercules (the Greek). **He was going to take an army across the Alps.**

## ROME AND CARTHAGE—CLASH OF EMPIRES

Rome and Carthage grew side by side, before facing each other in three major wars. Against the growing military might of Rome stood the great commercial empire of Carthage, which was located in what is now Tunisia.

In 219 BC, Rome began to hear of a fearsome general whose very name provoked fear in the streets.

**“Hannibal ad portas! Hannibal is at the gates!”**

In the First Punic War, Rome defeated Carthage, whose allies were led by Hannibal’s father, Hamilcar. Carthage spent the next twenty years preparing to wrest itself from the heavy burden of Roman tribute and rule.

At the age of nine, his father took him to an altar and, placing his hand on the sacrifice, made him swear that he would never be a friend to the Romans. At an early age, Hannibal was devoted to his father’s successor, Hasdrubal. On the death of Hasdrubal, Hannibal was appointed to command the Carthaginian army in Spain and he quickly conquered the remaining Spanish tribes in that region.

Alarmed at his success, a Roman ambassador was sent to Hannibal. He reminded Hannibal that any attack upon Saguntum would be viewed as a declaration of war upon Rome. Hannibal’s response was to lay siege to Saguntum in 219 BC and conquer it eight months later.

Instead of declaring war, the Romans sent another envoy demanding that Hannibal be removed from command and punished. If this was not done, Rome would declare war on Carthage. The Roman envoy **said, “Here, we bring you peace and war. Take which you will.”** The answer no less proudly rang out: “Whichever you please, we do not care. Fabius cried, ‘We give you war.’” Hannibal was appointed commander in chief at that moment—he had not reached twenty-five years of age.”

Hannibal’s major impediment to successful invasion by sea was Rome’s superior navy. Hannibal needed allies. He needed the help of Rome’s enemies, the Gauls, to resupply his army and provide him fresh troops.

## **CROSSING THE ALPS**

The Alps presented a formidable challenge. Above ten thousand feet, oxygen is insufficient to sustain human life. **Finding a path well below that would be difficult, yet that was where Hannibal pointed his armies.**

Rome quickly sent to intercept Hannibal before he could reach the critical mountain pass. Because of the speed of Hannibal's army, Publius was unable to reach them in time and returned to Italy to await Hannibal, **should he make it through the mountains—an occurrence Rome considered highly unlikely.**

Along the way, Hannibal decimated tribes that opposed him, gathered allies that assisted him, and built roads where none existed. **He left Spain in June of 218 BC with ninety thousand infantry, twelve thousand cavalry, and thirty-seven elephants. By the time Hannibal crossed the Pyrenees and Alps, he was reduced to half his infantry, two-thirds of his cavalry, and only a few of his elephants. It was a costly journey compared to what would have been a comparatively easy journey by sea. Yet, in addition to crossing the Alps, Hannibal accomplished the one goal he desperately sought—an alliance of Gauls to fight Rome.**

Hannibal spent the winter resting his men and successfully recruiting thirty thousand Gauls (French) to meet the forces Rome was rushing into northern Italy.

**Hannibal's strength rested in his ability to think beyond ordinary conventions and methods.** Crossing the Alps was the first example of *Hannibal's unique leadership creativity couldn't be defined by any particular style, method, or "box."* Rome faced Carthage and was time and again baffled and beaten by an inscrutable leader who always seemed one step ahead of the Romans—one step out of the box.

### FIRST CONTACT—ROME RUSHES TO DISASTER, 218 BC

*When your enemy rushes at you in haste, step aside and his own weight and speed will offer the opportunity to trip him up. (Axiom of martial arts).*

Rome's top general faced Hannibal almost immediately upon his arrival in December. Hungry to be the commander who defeated Hannibal, he hurriedly prepared his army for battle.

Only ten thousand (out of forty thousand) were able to escape. Hannibal probably lost only about five thousand men.

### SURPRISE AT LAKE TRASIMENO, 217 BC

*Battle in war is inevitable. When outnumbered—out-think. When out-thought—out-fight. When out-fought—disengage and vanish to fight another day. Always leave one ace in your pocket to be used when all else is lost.*

The Roman leaders expected Hannibal to soon march on Rome, and the road through to Po Valley was the easiest and most direct route. With two armies consisting of forty thousand and twenty thousand they blocked his path with a formidable force. *Hannibal knew he had limited resources in men and equipment. He elected to confuse rather than confront.* Hannibal then did what no one believed could be done. Hannibal sent his army and elephants into the flooded swamps. As they tried to tread through the soft mud, many died of exhaustion. Hannibal himself, riding upon an elephant, caught an infection and permanently lost the sight of one eye. Four days later, however, his army emerged south of Rome's legions. Hannibal's losses were heavy, but he had done what the Romans thought impossible. Nothing stood between Hannibal and Rome.

They were slaughtered like cattle, thirty thousand. Hannibal lost twenty-five hundred men.

Hannibal demonstrated a skilled use of geography and tactics. That day, the Romans saw what dozens of rampaging, armored elephants could do on the field of battle. The effect must have been truly terrifying. They stomped to death many in their ranks.

### THE BATTLE OF CANNAE, 217 BC

*Strength against strength weakens both—leaving the outcome gravely in doubt. Use your strength against weakness to produce confusion and panic. Never be afraid to allow your enemy to underestimate you, but prepare to respond when he acts upon his miscalculation.*

Rome appointed a new leader—Quintus Fabius Maximus. His name became synonymous with a strategy of early guerilla warfare known as “the Babian strategy.” Rome, was reduced to projecting the illusion of power. Fabius performed well, but Rome found it a bitter pill to swallow.

Since Hannibal was stronger in cavalry, Fabius kept his forces in the hills as a way of nullifying this advantage—choosing to strike and retreat, strike and retreat. The strategy avoided Roman defeat and dimmed Hannibal's glory. But it aroused great opposition among Romans themselves.

Fabius did what no commander had done before him; he surprised Hannibal. That night, recognizing his situation as desperate, Hannibal ordered all of the cattle in his camp gathered together. He tied torches to each of their horns and sent them stampeding into the Roman camp. Panic and confusion ensued. Under the cover of darkness, with fear rampant in the camp of the Romans, Hannibal extricated his entire army without the loss of a single man. An escape of seventy thousand soldiers.

## DISASTER AT CANNAE

For six months Fabius kept Hannibal at bay, but the Senate refused to extend his tenure as commander and instead appointed two consuls “who would make Rome proud by taking the fight to Hannibal.” “Rome assembled the largest army they had ever placed in the field, eighty thousand infantry, and seven thousand cavalry. They marched towards Hannibal.

The two commanders argued along the way about how to confront Hannibal.

Hannibal crossed over the Aufidus River. Hannibal hoped to use this positioning to entice the Romans into attacking him. By this point in the war, all of Hannibal’s elephants had died. It would be a battle upon the open plain between two superbly trained armies, Rome having the numerical advantage.

Both armies were arrayed in customary order, the infantry in the center and cavalry on both wings. But Hannibal pushed forward his less dependable Gauls and Spanish foot soldiers in the exact center, while holding back his strong African infantry on either side. This provided a natural magnet for the advancing Romans, who struck at the Gauls and Spaniards, forcing them to act, just as Hannibal had intended. The convex Cathaginian line, therefore, became concave, sagging ominously inward. The Roman legionnaires flushed with apparent success, crowded into this opening believing they were breaking the enemy front.

At this moment Hannibal gave the signal and the African foot soldiers suddenly wheeled inward from sides, striking the Roman flank and enveloping them into a tightly packed mass. Meanwhile Hannibal’s heavy cavalry on the left wing had broken through the weaker Roman cavalry on that side and had swept around the Roman rear to drive away the cavalry on the Roman left flank. Leaving the lighter Numidian (Algerian) cavalry on the right wing to pursue the Roman horsemen. Hannibal’s heavy cavalry delivered the final stroke by bursting onto the rear of the Roman legions, already enveloped on three sides and so compressed they were unable to offer effective resistance.

Cannae was a greater massacre than any of the combined losses up to this point. Of the eighty-seven thousand Romans that gave battle that day, only six thousand escaped. Hannibal lost about six thousand men.



From this point on, the war in Italy settled into a stalemate. Hannibal did not have the siege trains and engines required to breach Rome's walls while Rome lacked the stomach to confront Hannibal again after so many disasters. For the next eight years, Hannibal ravaged the country.

Far from home, Hannibal used strategies and tactics never before faced by the Romans. His ability to out-think his enemy, made him one of the first, and best, outside-of-the-box thinkers.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

The mind is capable of much more than we've discovered. **Creativity influences every aspect of life.**

**Increasing creativity requires challenging the mind to stretch itself beyond what it believes it is capable of achieving. Picasso noted "I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it."**

Habits and ways of approaching situations in life create impressions and deep ruts in the brain. "We have truly hard-wired our mechanism for thought. **We need to create flexibility in the brain to have flexibility of mind.**

If you want creative solutions, some rigid structures need to become more fluid.

Stretch the minds of those who work with and for you. Stimulate right-brain activity (creativity and intuitive thinking).

A second means to encourage and develop creativity is through humor.

A CEO says **creating a culture is their number-one priority.**

Laughter and humor change the atmosphere, lighten the heart, and increase morale.

In addition to exercising your brain, your body also needs exercise to increase creativity.

**Be prepared for those moments when your mind is open and new ideas pour in. Carry a notebook and write down your thoughts.**

Read everything you can get your hands on. Fill your mind with the knowledge of many fields not just your own.

Each of us has been endowed with creative energy. Warren Bennis said: "There are two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance. Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish."

*Fear has a tendency to paralyze. Creativity and fear seldom coexist. Fear will sometimes produce short-term results, but rarely long-term solutions. Creative minds believe they can devise the plans and methods needed to overcome anything—anything.*

*Too often we look at problems that have never been solved and join the rest of the world in agreement. Creative people don't focus on limitations; they focus on possibilities.*

*If you want to be a great leader, you're going to have to destroy the box within which many sit and make their decisions.* Studies show that even during sleep, the brain continues to work on solving problems.

### A PAUSE FOR A SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Most of us never produce a life of creative achievements because we have not connected to the Great Creator Himself—the source of all creative energy. If we listen to what God is saying to us, then we open ourselves to the possibility of living exceptional lives.

If you would be a creative leader—a Centurion leader—you must begin by being a creative individual.

### PATHWAY TO CREATIVITY

Forget about job security because at times you'll be out on the limb all by yourself. **There are no known road maps where you're going, but it is the road that all Centurions must take.**

## CHAPTER 2

### SCIPIO AFRICANUS CONQUEROR OF HANNIBAL

*Victory teaches the simple, failure the wise; success teaches a few lessons, failure a thousand.*  
*Study the lessons of the defeated.*

By the year 210 BC, Hannibal had ravaged Rome's countryside and most of Rome's allies in Spain as well.

Scipio was one of the six thousand Roman survivors who lived to tell of the Carthaginian massacre at Cannae. From that moment forward, **Scipio began serious study of the tactics of Hannibal.**

In spite of his youth, Scipio distinguished himself early at the age of seventeen.

Scipio had considerable civil leadership skills as well.

In 211 BC the Carthaginians defeated the Romans and killed Scipio's father and uncle in two separate battles in southern Spain.

The stench of defeat now permeated the halls of the Roman Senate. Most weren't interested in taking the helm of a sinking ship.

It was a well-known saying then that "if you want to rise up in the world, do the difficult." So, that day, Scipio rose up and placed his name before the Senate. He was twenty-four years of age.

The fact that he was so young made his subsequent appointment almost unprecedented.

**Surprise and deception can make a smaller army appear larger, a larger army appear invincible and achieve victory while greatly limiting casualties. Thomas Bacon said, "In the end, no matter the facts, man will believe the truth that most pleases him."**

Upon arriving, Scipio made a survey of Rome's field positions and visited his allies rallying support and inspiring confidence. He also *commended* the remaining Roman leadership noting that they had prevented a complete annihilation.

Carthaginian armies had not moved to defend their supply depot. **Too much victory can lead to complacency, Scipio took advantage of their oversight, attacking in his first major offensive.**

The Carthaginian armies under Hannibal in Italy were dependent upon Spain and Tunisia for resupply. If he could cut off and isolate the Carthaginian armies in Spain, perhaps he could turn the tide of war in both Spain and Italy.

The most enticing consideration was the Carthaginians had left only one thousand trained soldiers guarding it.

Scipio instructed his naval commander to sail to New Carthage and blockade the city's port. At the same time, he force-marched his army of twenty-seven thousand men to arrive there simultaneously.

Scipio launched an initial frontal attack against the eastern gate that failed, leaving many Roman casualties. As the city's dwellers rejoiced at their hated enemy's misfortune, Scipio prepared for a second assault against the same gate. At the same time, he took five hundred men and twenty-five ladders to the opposite side, which was protected by a lagoon now at low tide.

Scipio launched a simultaneous attack against two other positions. This three-pronged attack "fixed" all enemy forces in place and prevented them from moving to support the main attack against the lagoon. The five hundred men quickly ascended the lagoon wall, taking them by surprise and opening the way for the main body. In a stroke the Carthaginians had lost their main base, key to their control of Spain, and the strategic initiative.

As a result, a number of Iberian tribes who had supported Carthage joined Rome and tipped the balance of power in Rome's favor.

It was at this moment that Scipio's study of Carthaginian battle tactics paid off.

Scipio used elements of both deception and surprise to even the odds.

Scipio continued to attack Hasdrubal as his men retreated, placing forces all along the escape routes. The Carthaginians were forced to pass through the Roman gauntlet to get to their ships, and very few of them survived to escape. Carthage's mighty presence in Spain was broken.

## THE BATTLE IN THE SENATE

***To become a centurion, a leader must possess martial as well as moral courage. Lack the first and you will find death. Lack the second and you will find disgrace. Lack them both and you will find yourself a politician.***

In time, each type of courage is tested.

Scipio had cut off Hannibal's supply lines from Spain; however, Hannibal still had Carthage itself to supply his ongoing war in Italy. Scipio returned to Rome with a surprising proposal. He wanted to take his legions to Africa to threaten the capital city of Carthage. By doing so, he hoped to force Hannibal to leave Italy to come to the aid of his homeland.

Scipio stood before the Senate and made his case to take the war to Carthage itself.

His primary adversary in the Senate was Fabius, the consul who had developed the hit-and-run strategy against Hannibal.

His character, his motives, his competence, and his wisdom were all mercilessly attacked in the Senate; however, Scipio continued to hold his ground, arguing the merits of his strategy.

While Rome finally supported Scipio, he was allowed to take only volunteers and whatever support he could gather in Africa. To guard against Hannibal, Rome insisted that four legions remain in Italy, and Scipio was able to raise only two legions of volunteers, he wouldn't be bringing the five to six legions he would need to equal the forces they would field in Africa.

### **SCIPIO LANDS IN AFRICA, 204 BC**

Scipio landed with thirty thousand Roman troops. He faced thirty thousand infantry as well as fifty thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry. Beyond being outnumbered, Scipio lacked intelligence as to the exact locations, strength and weaknesses of the two armies facing him. Scipio sent ambassadors under the guise of diplomacy to gather intelligence.

Scipio halted the negotiations and began a series of movements to confuse the enemy to simulate preparations to attack. That night as the Carthaginians watched the hills, Scipio marched his legions silently toward their camp, arriving at midnight.

The end result was a massacre. Forty thousand Carthaginians and Numidians were killed or died in the flames, and five thousand were captured.

The Carthaginians sent to Spain for reinforcements and, when they arrived, marched out to face Scipio again. This time the numbers were more equal. The end result was the same; a decisive *Rome Victor*—a Roman triumph.

“The frightened Carthaginian Senate frantically called Hannibal back from Italy, just as Scipio had predicted would occur when Carthage was threatened.”

### **SCIPIO vs. HANNIBAL**

*Study your enemy until you are absolutely certain of his habits.  
In his habits you will find his weakness.*

Scipio understood, being far from home, his own position would grow weaker over time, while Hannibal's would grow stronger.

When Hannibal's ships touched the shore, he drove his army at Scipio's with haste. Scipio would face Hannibal's fifty thousand men with his own thirty-six thousand. Even so, Scipio believed his best opportunity for victory was sooner, rather than later.

Hannibal sent three spies. Scipio's army intercepted all the spies. Standard practice was immediate execution. However, Scipio took the spies and gave them a tour of the camp, then told them to return to their lines. Hannibal was impressed and requested a meeting with Scipio before the battle began.

Scipio called his commanders and presented his strategy. Hannibal's elephants had broken the backs of many Roman legions, advancing as fearsome, unstoppable forces overrunning all in their path. Defeat after defeat taught Scipio he must deal with this or face the same ruin.

Hannibal was superior to Scipio in every respect, except cavalry—where Scipio had recruited large numbers of Numidians.

The battle began as Hannibal ordered his elephants to charge the Roman legions. Scipio responded by blowing a large number of trumpets as soon as the elephants charged. The elephants were terrified. Some stopped in place, others turned and began to trample Hannibal's own troops, and others rushed madly forward. Confusion was the commander for some time. Scipio avoided the mass casualties that usually marked the beginning of each battle with Hannibal.

While the elephants began their stampede, the Roman cavalry launched an attack against the Carthaginian cavalry on the flanks and forced them into flight. Scipio now advanced against the front line of mercenaries. Hannibal's front-line mercenaries flee. Hannibal's second lines, however, were so disciplined they refused to break ranks and continued to march forward, killing their own front lines who were attempting to retreat through them.

The second Carthaginian line now began to push the Romans back and inflict significant damage. "Although the Romans began to waver, they gradually cut the Carthaginians to pieces."

As the second line began to falter and fall back, the third line of Carthaginian veterans refused to break ranks. "Advance and live or retreat and die" was the axiom for the first half of this day's combat.

The battle now fell to the hard-core Roman and Carthaginian troops. As they faced each other to engage, Scipio recognized that his army was now in great danger, so he ordered his lines reformed. Scipio knew he could not endure a sustained battle against the larger forces of Carthage. Yet it would provide him time—time enough to play one last ace. Scipio was awaiting the return of his cavalry.

The fresh cavalry attacked the rear of Carthage's infantry and sealed their fate. "Hannibal lost twenty thousand men and almost as many prisoners. Hannibal himself and some other survivors slipped away, Scipio only lost two thousand."

**The battle of Zama broke the back of the Carthaginian Empire.** Some fifty years later, disputes between Carthage and Rome over tribute payments resulted in the sacking of Carthage, leaving it without a stone standing.

Following his triumphal return to Rome, Scipio became the first Roman general to receive the name of the land he had conquered, Scipio "Africanus."

Scipio spent almost fifteen years studying the habits of Hannibal. In the end, Scipio used the habits of Hannibal to overcome disadvantage on his enemy's doorstep.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

**Look hard in the mirror to see what is there and more important, what isn't there. That's what this principle is all about. It's about beginning with learning, rather than fighting without it.**

*There is no doubt that he was courageous, but he was also smart enough to "know that he didn't know" enough.* Clint Eastwood "A man's got to know his limitations"? Too many don't. Scipio studied the battles of those who had been defeated by Hannibal, and then devised means to overcome Hannibal's strengths.

Hannibal? Why did he fail? He didn't realize that Rome, specifically Scipio, "was going to school on him."

**Those at the top should expect their methods to be studied, which means a Centurion can never stop studying, learning, and evolving.** Alexander, the historian noted, "It is ironic that the man who had shown the ancient world the combination of mobility and shock-force that cavalry could provide would himself be defeated by this weapon."

*Go to school on your competition because your competition is going to school on you.*

*Failure and defeat can be the most powerful catalysts of change—if arrogance and pride can be put aside.*

Some people have become legendary for facing and overcoming their failures. Tom Watson, founder of IBM, used to say,

**To double your success rate, double your failure rate.** The inventors and companies that are able to capitalize on their “happy accidents” are those that are the most flexible and responsive to the unexpected opportunities before them.

Babe Ruth struck out more times than he hit home runs. A newspaper fired Walt Disney because he had “no good ideas.”

## IN THE WORKPLACE

**Models of success are very important, but we gravely underestimate the power of failure in propelling us toward success and achievement. Bad leadership drives away and keeps away great talent.**

Retention studies show that 70 to 80 percent of the reasons why people leave companies are related to bosses.

If you and your organization aren’t willing to examine failure as a means to improvement, other people will be doing it for you.

We all face failure at some point in our lives, but not everyone learns or recovers from it. Today, leaders are falling and failing because of moral vacancy.

**If you aren’t interested in learning from the failures of others and applying corrective actions, you will soon join their ranks.**

If you would be a great leader, study the lessons of the defeated before you study the lessons of the victorious. In the defeated you will find the conditions of human frailty and weakness by which all leaders are affected. In studying Hannibal, Scipio grew in leadership competence. He also discovered that which we all have—weaknesses. In battle, he tried to minimize his weaknesses while countering the strengths of his enemy with unique solutions, created well beyond the box. **If you can recognize the shortcomings in your professional competence—then you have begun the journey toward becoming a Centurion.**

## PATHWAY TO MAKING FAILURE YOUR STEPPING-STONE TO VICTORY

**Begin by learning from your own failures.**

- Be a lifelong learner.
- Don’t quit. Have courage in the face of adversity.



- If you make mistakes, acknowledge your responsibility.
- Learn from your errors.
- Be open to feedback and criticism.

**Before you engage your enemies, like Scipio, you must understand their habits, their weaknesses, and their reasons for success. You must find the scraps of information upon which lives may one day hang in the balance.** When it comes to your opponents:

- Read their writings.
- Consult those who work with and for them.
- Learn from those who have been defeated by your enemy.
- Discern their vices, habits, and weaknesses.

**Failure is a reality for all who risk. Centurions learn over time that victory teaches the simple while failure instructs the wise.**

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **ALEXANDER THE GREAT CONQUEROR OF THE WORLD**

**You must unify your people before you can lead them to great ends.**

**THERE IS NOTHING MORE EXCITING THAN TO WORK on a team or within an organization that knows where it's going and what it wants to accomplish.** Add to that a leader who knows when to add power and focus and when to back off and let the team run with the ball, and you have a group ready to tackle the toughest problems.

**How do you become such a leader and inspire such followers? How do you achieve such unity of purpose and heart?**

**Unity of purpose is a principle that sounds corny at first, like one of the many motivational signs leaders stick up on the walls. And if you're putting up posters to instill culture, you've already lost the battle.**

Unity comes from a deeper well than the surface water of motivational slogans, and it begins with the leader. Find the means to unify everyone.

Unity is not motivating a group to speak the same words, but to speak the same language. It's about instilling a high-value, common purpose that most will pursue, even if it comes at the expense of self.

## YOUNG ALEXANDER—RISE TO NATIONAL POWER

By the fourth century BC, Greece was tired of being a humiliated vassal and paying tribute to the Persian Empire. It was into this world that Alexander was born. The Greek cities along the Mediterranean were known as city-states that fiercely protected their independence from one another. This ensured their independence but also enabled the Persians to isolate and conquer them.

In 338 BC Philip confronted a coalition of Greek states at Chaeronea and soundly defeated them. The jealously and fiercely guarded independence of the city-states was beginning to wane. Philip assumed control of a forcibly united Greece. The time had come to begin to liberate the city-states that were governed by Persian *satraps* (literally “guardians of power”).

**At a ceremony to commemorate the upcoming expedition, Philip was struck down by an assassin. He died shortly after, leaving this twenty-year-old son, Alexander, in tenuous control.**

Alexander was educated in science, literature, and physical training under Leonidas. He was later tutored by Aristotle in philosophy, political science, poetry, and drama. “By age sixteen, the young prince was considered qualified to act as regent while his father was away on military campaigns.” He fought courageously at his father’s side during the battle of Chaeronea and earned the respect of the army, before reaching age nineteen.

Upon his father’s death, Alexander was named general in chief. His army successfully crushed the rebels at the city of Thebes. “Terror-stricken, the other Greek cities (including Athens) made amends.

Alexander, having solidified the home front, now prepared to liberate the other Greek city-states that were being crushed by Darius and the Persian Empire.

## THE POWER OF PERSIA

To call the expedition Alexander was about to lead a “David and Goliath” affair is a vast understatement.

The Persian kings built major thoroughfares that connected the major centers of their power. This meant any rebellion in the outer portions of their kingdom could be easily handled within a month.

The Persians installed their own governors, or satraps, in each city to ensure proper “tribute” was paid each year. The wealth of Persia was renowned. If Alexander could succeed, he could use some of this money to buy armies and loyalty. But this would not be enough. He needed to build unity.

**To bring unity to so many cultures, languages, and religions was an achievement no leader before him had attempted.** The odds were against him. He would face a king who could field an army numbering in the hundreds of thousands. *As he left Greece, few expected he would ever return.*

### FIRST BLOOD—TROY, 334 BC

Those that were with him were motivated by dreams of wealth rather than by Alexander’s desire to free Greece from Persia.

Upon hearing of Alexander’s victory at Troy, the nearby city of Sardis surrendered without a fight. The city was the wealthy center of Persia power in the west, its inhabitants, were the first noblemen to ever surrender to the Greeks. Because of this, Alexander elevated these nobles to serve at his side—the same honor they held under Darius. In Sardis, and the next city he conquered Dacylium, “the local administrative structures were left in place, although all the major posts were put exclusively in the hands of Macedonians and Greeks. His treatment of the conquered began to have its intended effect. **Rather than fearing a blood-thirsty army, cities began to send emissaries to arrange agreements of surrender.**

*“It is not in numbers but in unity that our great strength lies.* Thomas Paine, 1776

“As a general rule, when Alexander took possession he established democratic government in the cities he had liberated, unlike the Persians, who had installed local tyrants.

Within a year, Alexander had brought the Persian Empire in Turkey to its knees. City after city fell or surrendered to Alexander’s army. As he prepared to enter Syria, a strategy of liberation would be useless. Something else was going to be needed.

### ALEXANDER AND DARIUS III IN THE BATTLE OF ISSUS, SYRIA, 333 BC

By now **Alexander had the attention of Darius.**

The army under Darius gathered near the ancient city of Babylon and marched toward the Macedonian position. **Alexander was outnumbered two to one in cavalry and three to one in infantry.** Darius fielded one hundred thousand foot soldiers and eleven thousand horsemen.

In order to retain the lands he had liberated and regain the unity he built in the Greek city-states, he would have to win the upcoming battle.

Darius's army had grown to some three hundred thousand soldiers in addition to an equal number of his court.

The armies faced each other across a small river and the battle was joined. The armies were flanked by the sea on one side and mountains on the other.

**“Alexander turned his gaze in all directions, seeking Darius. As soon as he saw him, he raced into the field with his horsemen straight for the Great King in person, for more than achieving victory over the Persians; he wished to be the personal instrument of victory.”**

For several hours the battle hung in the balance. Alexander was wounded in the thigh but continued to fight valiantly at the head of his army.

The infantry of Alexander with their eighteen-foot spears and superior maneuverability cut through the Persian infantry and left legions of dead underneath their feet as they pressed forward. At this point, Darius was seized with terror and turned with many of his men to flee.

The Persians suffered more than one hundred thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry casualties. Alexander escaped with the loss of about five hundred infantry and cavalry. This overwhelming victory sent a thunderbolt of shock.

Just as important as the loss of wealth was the loss of political esteem Darius suffered that day.

### **BUILDING UNITY IN A CONQUERED LAND**

**Alexander was wiser than many at that time. He understood he had won more than a battle.** He had won a new strategy for undermining the Persian Empire.

The first thing Alexander's historians or “publicists” did was to publish stories far and wide of the battle and of the behavior of the Great King, Darius. They compared the courage of Alexander that day to the fear of Darius, who fled the battlefield and abandoned his army and family.

Alexander rode into Darius's camp to review the booty. Standing before him was Darius's mother, his wife, two daughters, and his youngest son. His merciful treatment of Darius's family was a story that spread quickly and helped his image immensely as he began his conquest.

Sideon, Bablos, Aradus, Rhodes, and Cyprus surrendered without a fight while Tyre opposed him. "Phoenician ports supplied the Persian Empire with the bulk of its war fleet and seamen. Tyre was the wealthiest and most powerful of them—hence Alexander's relentless siege of the city, which lasted ten months. Alexander now had supremacy of land and sea in the west.

Nothing stood between Alexander and Egypt, and in the autumn of 332 BC he entered Egypt unopposed, taking possession of the capital. "To mark his possession of the Egyptian shore, Alexander founded a new city in the Nile delta, which he named after himself Alexandria."

**At this point, Alexander unveiled a new method of creating unity among conquered territory. He decreed that civil government remain in the hands of the Egyptian governor, while military and economic control was placed under Greek and Macedonian administrators. This was a significant tool that he used repeatedly as he began his march through city after city into the heart of Persia.**

**Alexander's method served two purposes. It created a smooth transition between the old powers and new, so the average citizen was less inclined to chafe against Alexander's rule. More important, the message of his treatment of these nations preceded him on his way into the heart of Persia.** When his trust was proven to be unfounded he did not hesitate to replace the corrupt and disloyal. Again, this method of dealing with the conquered was immensely successful in building loyalty and unity within his growing empire.

### **BATTLE AT BABYLON, 331 BC**

For three years Alexander took city after city, but he had yet to face Darius in his own land, and he longed to defeat him again in battle. In the spring of 331 BC, Darius fielded a new army near Babylon.

Darius called for every available person able to carry arms. His army numbered somewhere between a half million and a million soldiers. Again Alexander would enter the field of battle at a significant numerical disadvantage. Additionally, Darius fielded a new chariot as a weapon. "Iron pointed spears protruded ahead of the horses, three sword-blades were affixed on either side of the yoke; javelin points stuck outward from the spokes of the wheels; scythe blades welded to the wheel rims mowed down everything the horses encountered in their charge."

Remembering the last encounter with Alexander, Darius chose a wide plain to spread out his cavalry and infantry. He had planted iron spikes in the ground to wound the enemy's horses.

Darius staked everything on his iron-spiked chariots, confidently believing they would tear Alexander's infantry to shreds.

Alexander crossed the Tigris unopposed and found Darius waiting for him near Babylon. When he saw the chariots, he armed numerous men as archers to rain arrows down upon the chariots before they could reach his own infantry. **It was a brilliant move that decimated the new chariots. Darius was stunned, as were the nearly half a million troops.** Defeat was once more in store for the Persians. Again Darius fled, leaving in Alexander's hands: much treasure, Darius' own bow, his arrows, and his chariot.

Instead of pursuing Darius, Alexander marched his army into the ancient city of Babylon. Again, his aim wasn't the destruction of the cities he conquered, but their loyalty—their unification with his growing empire.

**Alexander also spent time researching the cultural and religious habits of the people he conquered.** He would pay respect to the icons of their history. He sought to cause no offense to any culture and language group that fell under his growing domain, even in the area of their religion.

### FINAL BATTLE AND TREACHERY AT PERSEPOLIS, 331 BC

While Alexander's conquests continued beyond Persia into India, he made two unusual decisions that cemented his reputation as a master of unifying both his army and his conquests.

By 331 BC, Alexander's army had thrust deep into the heart of the Persian Empire.

Persepolis, located in the southern portion of modern-day Iran, was the jewel and crown of the Persian Empire. It was well defended by a triple wall that encircled the entire city.

The great highway from Susa to Persepolis was guarded by a series of fortresses and should have provided adequate resistance to any invader. Alexander split his forces, leaving Parmenio to command the assault on the capitol of Persia, while he and his remaining troops took to the hills to engage the Persian army.

Where was Darius? Alexander searched out the city and found the palaces, storehouses, and treasury of the Persian Empire to be beyond their most vivid imaginations.

The "once" Great King Darius continued to flee to the east, dreaming of revenge. More and more, his former satraps refused to assist him. Entire units lost heart and deserted him, and the Persians from his entourage left to offer their services to Alexander.

In spite of Alexander's diligent pursuit, it was several of Darius's own men who recognized the warning signs. Hoping to secure their own safety and the goodwill of Alexander, they executed him. For Alexander, Darius's murder was a great political windfall.

Alexander was wise enough to understand that there were many in Persia who reviled him as a usurper of the worst king. Alexander placated Darius's supporters and solidified his gains in eastern Iran. Alexander assumed the role as the great avenger of King Darius. He ordered Darius's murderers hunted down and killed.

“Alexander handled Darius's body with great respect, bearing it with him to Persepolis to be buried in the traditional Persian style.”

Alexander covered more territory and conquered more lands and people than any single ruler in history. Alexander had led his army halfway across the known world to the Indus River of India before he finally headed for home some six years later.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

**HOW ARE YOU GOING TO CREATE UNITY within your organization?** He never expected his satraps in Babylon and those in Egypt to align their processes and goals with each other. **That was his job! He gave strategic direction, set up the political and military elements, and then expected his guidance to be followed—and enforced his will when necessary.**  
**It was then and is now the Centurion's responsibility to create unity.**

Organizational unity is simply the subordination of personal goals and purposes to those of the organization. **It occurs when those who work for the organization are inspired to accomplish something greater than they could alone. It is easier to define than to achieve, and it is almost always fleeting.**

### A CASE STUDY IN DISUNITY—THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

The Secret Service is comprised of two major organizations that are highly segregated, though they still work side by side.

### YOU'RE HIRED—PROVIDE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ASAP!

The bitter and sweet of leadership is the reality that you are hired to solve intractable and previously unsolvable problems. Likely, your boss will ask for solutions in what most would view as an unrealistic timeline. Get used to it because it doesn't get better.

I would recommend you take some time alone or in groups and provide your recommendations along with barriers, timelines, and consequences for failing to change.

“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.  
And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”  
Mark 3:24-25

**Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to build bridges.**

## A PAUSE FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

What is it about unity that is so important? Even Jesus in the last hours of His life prayed. (John 17.) What kind of oneness is He talking about?

“Oneness” is being inextricably linked to a common cause and a common purpose. Paul encourages believers ( Phil. 2:2). **If we are to lead well, we must also be able to follow well.** **Becoming part of a team and learning how to function and support others is probably one of the first requisites of a future leader.** As a leader you will have to find ways to unify elements within your organization that cannot or will not rise above petty differences for the common good.

**Begin by asking yourself. “Have I supported my own supervisor and leaders above him?”**  
**Do you give honor to whom honor is due, and are you in the habit of avoiding gossip and slander of peers and leaders?**

**Another attribute of unity that members are committed to is a common cause... and equally committed to resolving conflicts and barriers to reaching that goal. That includes relationship problems. (Eph. 4:3)**

Finally, **the Bible promises, “But God is the Judge; He puts down one, and exalts another” (Ps. 75:7). If your role today is small and unrecognized, know that this is God’s place for you—now.**

Can you trust the Great Designer who has placed you firmly in your place. **The bricks at the top of a wall are no more or less important than those at the bottom.** Were those at the bottom removed, the entire wall would collapse. **To bring unity, one must also be a unifying force—whatever your level of leadership.**

## PATHWAY TO CREATING UNITY WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION



Alexander created unity in six primary ways.

1. He used strategies appropriate to the regions he conquered.
2. He ensured promotions were based on merit rather than upon birth. He held on to this principle at a time when the class system was the norm.
3. He took time to learn about each conquered group and was careful to tread carefully around their religious and cultural sensitivities.
4. **He set and enforced his standards**, harshly at times, **to ensure loyalty and unity**.
5. **He was courageous**. None doubted his competence for leadership, which helped him institute even unpopular policies.
6. Finally, he was an outstanding communicator who was unafraid to go toe-to-toe with friend or foe in arguing his point. *He didn't send orders from Greece, but instead, like all great Centurions, he led his battles from the front.*

## CHAPTER 4

### JOAN OF ARC THE MAID OF LORRAINE—DELIVERER OF ORLÉANS AND FRANCE

Ranks and titles don't inspire ordinary people to extraordinary ends—a pure heart committed to a great cause with unwavering faith can lead even a nation out of chains into freedom.

BEFORE YOU READ ABOUT THE LIFE OF THIS CENTURION, I'd like you to visualize the largest problem you are currently facing. Consider the resources available to conquer this challenge. Now let's consider the life of a Centurion leader who also faced what seemed to be an insurmountable mountain.

Outside the city of Orléans the French in the spring of 1429 gathered to devise a strategy to rid the city and surrounding area of the English invaders. Orléans had been under siege for eight months and the people had been starved while the English controlled the main entry points to the city. France was weak and divided and led by a fainthearted, vacillating king.

A teenage girl named Joan had been sent by Charles to assist the French commanders for some dubious moral reasons. It put the commanders in an awkward position. What did this girl know of war?

Joan entered the tent as their meeting was breaking up. Having come from prayer and Mass, she disagreed with their decision to delay: **“You have been in your council and I in mine; and believe me, the council of the Lord will be carried out and will endure, and your council will perish.”**

“Joan told him, ‘Like it or not, the soldiers will go out and they will win as they have won before.’” The garrison and town militia rallied to Joan’s orders with such enthusiasm that the senior commanders resisting her were threatened by the crowd with bodily harm. “In the name of God, you will soon enter the fortress, never doubt it, and the English will have no more strength against you. Rest for a while, eat and drink.” They did as she bade; after which she told them, “Return to the assault, before God, for the English will have no more will to defend themselves, *and their ramparts will be taken.*”

**Two tries, substantial casualties, and nothing to show for it. Why should the French leaders believe her? This Joan was an illiterate and unschooled child of peasant parentage, and all of eighteen years of age.**

## THE SAD STATE OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

The worse of it all was Charles VI “disinherited and banished his son Charles, the dauphin, and named King Henry V of England heir and regent of France.”

## FIFTEENTH-CENTURY LIFE

The spiritual influences upon French and English culture in the fifteenth century came from the Catholic Church and those involved in astrology and witchcraft. The Protestant Reformation was still about a century away, the Catholic Church exercised significant influence all across Europe.

**To add to the instability, the plague had spread through Europe just a few years earlier in 1348 and killed twenty-five million people—a third of Europe’s population.**

**It was a confusing and dark time period during which a peasant child was born in a small village in northeastern France.**

## DOMREMY—BIRTHPLACE OF JEANNE D’ARC

At the time of Joan’s birth, the war with England had been superseded by a French civil war. The effect on the people of Joan’s class was devastating. “English soldiers would march through enemy territory “burning and destroying all.

By now Joan was thirteen, and while little is known of her early life, she had already been baptized in the village church next to her family's home. Recognized by the village priest and her playmates as being more pious than most. Joan spent her early years like most of the village girls actively doing "woman's work, spinning, and household chores" along with "helping her father in the fields harvesting."

**But something had happened to her when she was thirteen.** Jeanne D'Arc had her first angelic visitation. In her own words,

When I was thirteen years old, I had a voice from God to help me govern my conduct. And the first time I was very fearful. Rarely do I hear it without brightness. This brightness comes from the same side as the voice is heard. The voice was sent to me by God and, after I had thrice heard this voice, I knew that it was the voice of an angel. This voice has always guarded me well and I have always understood it clearly.

It has taught me to conduct myself well, to go habitually to church. It told me that I, Joan, should come in to France. The voice told me that I should raise the siege laid to the city of Orleans. The voice told me also that Robert de Baudricourt would give me people to go with me. And me, I answered it that I was a poor girl who knew not how to ride nor lead in war.

**Joan had never traveled beyond her small village.** Joan had been given a vision and her faith, commitment, and courage to pursue that vision were about to be tested.

### HUMILIATION AT VAUCOULEURS

By now, Joan noted that the voices began to speak to her two to three times a week, telling her she must go to France. She overheard her father "He had dreamed that Joan would go off with the soldiers, 'If I thought that such a thing could happen as I have dreamed, I should want you to drown her; and if you did not, I would drown her myself.'"

Though she was barely seventeen, in the spring of 1428 she left secretly.

Joan's cousin in Vancouleurs housed her upon her arrival and requested her husband's assistance in taking her to Robert de Baudricourt. Her insistence, purity, and passionate conviction finally won him over.

Joan said that the kingdom did not belong to the dauphin, but to her Lord; and that the Lord wanted the dauphin to be made king...and that she would lead him to be consecrated. *Asked who was her Lord, she answered: "The King of Heaven."*

In January of 1429, her voices insisted that she should go again. She went again, lodged with friends for three weeks, and was finally told Baudricourt would not see her. "I have come here to the royal chamber to have me taken to the king; *before mid-Lent, I must go to the king, even if I have to walk my feet off to my knees.*"

**It was at this moment that Jeanne made her first convert among the nobility. *Meanwhile, Jeanne spent every day in the castle chapel praying.***

Rumors began to spread that a Maid (pure virgin) with super-natural powers was in their region.

She couldn't have been more surprised to find a small miracle awaiting her. Jean de Metz and five other men-at-arms were sent by Baudricourt to take Joan to see the Dauphin.

She answered that she feared not men-at-arms . . . she had God, her Lord, who would clear the way for her to go and that she had been born to do this.

#### TO THE DAUPHIN

*Joan had a charisma that stemmed from the purity of her character and the cause of her life. The charisma and inner light began to affect all who encountered her.*

*Her words set a fire in his heart.*

Joan repeatedly told us not to be afraid. She never swore, and I myself was much stimulated by her voices, for it seemed to me that she was sent by God, and I never saw in her any evil, but always was she so virtuous a girl and that she seemed a saint.

The only regret expressed by Joan during the trip was that, because of the danger, they were unable to stop at any church to pray and celebrate Mass.

#### CHINON—A CASTLE AND KINGDOM IN RUIN

Since the Treaty of Troyes, where his mother cast doubt upon his own legitimacy, Charles "remained sunk in apathy, utterly hopeless, and quite indifferent to the affairs of state . . ." Charles was only twenty-six when seventeen-year-old Joan arrived.

Upon arriving, Joan sent the king a message stating she had “traveled one hundred and fifty leagues to come to him and bring him aid and messages for his ears alone. Joan spent two days in prayer and attending Mass waiting for the king’s answer. When she arrived, she was met by his council, who demanded to hear what she would say to the king.

She informed them that she had come on behalf of the King of Heaven to raise the siege of Orleans and to take the king to Reims for his coronation and consecration. Joan at last was P **“The King of Heaven has sent me.”**

The room was electrified, and the king was joyous. He took Joan aside, they talked a long time, and he grew more elated as time passed. The king said she had relayed to him “a certain secret that nobody knew or could know but God. That is why he had great confidence in her.”

**Still, he was beset with doubts and insecurity and counselors who continued to minimize and even vilify Joan’s counsel and mission.** Ultimately, he decided to send Joan to Poitiers where clergy, doctor’s, kind’s counselors, and those knowledgeable in cannon and civil law could examine her.

**Those who lead with moral authority, with honesty and integrity, can expect their lives to be examined—particularly by those who don’t.** A prophecy had been spread for nearly a hundred years that a woman would ruin the kingdom and a virgin from the east, a maid from Lorraine, would restore it. The kingdom lay in ruin. Was Jeanne D’Arc the maid who would restore it?

## POITIERS

The examination lasted three weeks.

The commission questioned her visions and angelic visitations that she identified as St. Michael, St. Margaret, and St. Catherine.

**In the name of God, the soldiers will fight and God will give victory.**

After three weeks of questioning, the first part of the inquiry ended, and “the commission reported that Joan was a good Christian and a true Catholic . . . and a very good person.” Following this verbal examination, Joan was forced to undergo a physical exam to discover, a committee of ladies conducted the exam and reported they found her . . . a true and complete virgin (*une vraye et entiere pucelle*).”

Joan now took the offensive. She told her examiners that she must be given the soldiers she needed and they must let her go to Orleans. “She then prophesied four events.

*At the end of three weeks of interrogations Joan left her examiners a final word: “There is more in the books of our Lord than in yours.” The committee concluded, “Joan’s faith, way of life, and past are irreproachable, there is nothing in her but good, humility, simplicity, virginity and honesty. The ready wisdom of her responses and the sanctity of her life weigh in favor of her mission being a divine one.*

The king accorded Joan the title of *chef de guerre*, or war chief, equal to the captains of war that led the French army. It was a remarkable designation as a seventeen-year-old illiterate, peasant girl.

### ORLÉANS—TURNING POINT OF THE ONE HUNDRED YEARS WAR

Joan now stood “in title” as an equal to the male captains of war. But clearly, *titles do not make commanders, nor do they win respect.*

Joan wanted to attack the English army immediately.

Dunois explained that he and others wiser than he had made the decision. Joan answered, ‘In the name of God, the counsel of God is safer and wiser than yours. I bring you better help than any knight or city, the help of the King of Heaven. It does not come for love of me, but from God Himself.

Joan, arrayed in full armor, waited until dark and “rode through the Burgundy gate, fully armed, on a white horse her standard carried before her. The English were completely surprised by her arrival and subsequent relief of the city.

The English were completely surprised by her arrival and subsequent relief of the city.

Among the people of France, her arrival was nothing short of a miracle. Joan dictated a letter to the English commander Talbot.

In very simple language, she demanded the English give up the siege and go home. The English replied “they would burn her, that she was nothing but a whore, and that she should go back to watching her cows.”

She expected each soldier to confess his sins before every battle. On this she was immovable, and even her captains complied.

Yet even Dunois did not take her role seriously. Thus, he led a charge without telling her. Sadly, it was a disaster.

“On catching sight of Joan, the embattled French gave a cheer, renewed that faltering assault and the English in St. Loup suddenly yielded.

Joan ordered that since the following day was Ascension Day, the French would not wage war, and that “all soldiers would go to confession and no camp followers should accompany the army since it was for such sins that God would let us lose the war.”

Until now, Joan had exercised only moral authority. At the following day’s strategy session, she was invited to join them.

“An advance party of the French were returning with the bad news that they were not strong enough to take the fort, but Joan cried out **“Let us go boldly in the name of the Lord.”**”

By the end of that day, the French had forced the English from Les Augustins into the Tourelles. There were many casualties and Joan had been wounded in the foot, but they had won the battle.

The captains had decided **it would be wiser not to fight the following day. Joan replied with her immoral words: “You have been in your council, and I in mine; and believe me, the council of the Lord will be carried out and will endure, and your council will perish.”**

In the afternoon, as she had predicted, Joan was shot through her shoulder with an arrow.

Many were disheartened as Joan was carried from the battlefield. Yet Joan told them firmly, “In the name of God, you will soon enter the fortress, never doubt it, and the English will have not more strength against you. Return to the assault, before God for the English will have no more will to defend themselves, *and their ramparts will be taken.*”

The English, seeing the fall of the Maid, were greatly heartened. Joan mounted her horse and went off into a nearby vineyard where she prayed.

The French, seeing her standard raised in her hands, surged forward and stormed the ramparts. The French were closing in from all directions. Just two nights before, Joan had come out again to plead with the English to surrender or suffer an evil loss.

In Orleans the bells rang. **The armies stood facing each other for two hours without moving. Finally, Joan asked for a makeshift altar to be set up where she knelt and prayed. She prayed for nearly an hour, and when she finished, she turned and faced the English. Looking at her, the English army disbanded.** Asked what the French should do, she replied, “Our Lord does not want us to fight them today; you will have them another time.”

The word spread like a fire all the way to London that a Maid had raised the siege at Orléans—not a warrior, but through witchcraft. “The English feared her as much as a large army [and]

more than the rest of the French army, and from that moment on sought to lay hands on her to try her as a witch.”

## POSTSCRIPT

**Following the victory at Orleans, Joan led the king’s army in battle through six Burgundian-held towns to bring her sovereign to Reims.** On July 17 1429, with her standard flying, she stood next to Charles VII as he was crowned in the church at Reims. ***She had fulfilled her vision and commission.***

**Less than a year later she was captured by the English. She was tried by her captors and burned at the stake in May 1431, at the age of nineteen.** Her answers during a year of inquisition were such that no fault in her character and behavior could be found. Ultimately, the basis for execution was that she wore men’s clothes during her soldiering.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY’S CENTURIONS

**One of the most remarkable facets of Joan’s leadership was the power of purity in her character and its effect on those who followed her.**

You may not have been visited by an angel, giving you guidance, but you have been given something that is common to all men and women. A conscience—an internal guide to what is good and what is not.

***Deeds are what give words power.***

If workers rise up only to the level of expectation of their leaders, then there is a direct correlation between the character of a leader and the organization achieving its mission goals.

***“The spirit of morality, said Aristotle, is awakened in the individual only through the witness and conduct of a moral person”.*** We can only hope for a day when the people will cry out, saying, “Enough! We will have strength *and* honor in our leaders, or we will have new leaders in their place.”

***Centurions are not averse to taking strong positions based upon integrity, professional competence, and courageous commitment to a vision that eludes lesser leaders.*** They are not easily blown by the winds of public opinion. ***They are not easily blown by the winds of public opinion. They wield a moral power that breaks the chains of many while wounding the ambition, pride and power of those of lesser nobility. In taking their stand, Centurions create supporters and opponents, friends and enemies.*** Sadly, lesser leaders, who “stand for nothing”



or serve only themselves, create the same divisions without benefiting the organization they serve.

**What means are you going to use to drive your team.** It is vital to take a moment and examine yourself—look at your inner core—and honestly evaluate how you motivate yourself, your team, and your peers each day. This is one of the defining aspects that identify you either as a manager or as a Centurion.

If you would raise the bar of your leadership, Joan’s example is immensely useful, as she had no position, experience, champion, or friend in high places. Lacking skills and expertise, she had none. **She believed an uncompromising faith that she was being called to accomplish something greater than she had the means to achieve. She believed in a destiny larger than herself.**

In Joan, it pleased the Almighty to prove “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”

**When your people look at you, what do they see you standing up for? You must have the courage to commit yourself to your destiny, against whatever odds are before you, and to live out the dream that’s been planted in your heart. Sound rare? It is, and that is why there are so few Centurions.**

Most leaders lean on their power, their rank, or their title to motivate people. **Too many leaders today obviously lack a moral compass and don’t even know it’s missing.**

The higher we rise in life, in position, and in rank, the more we are tempted to use the blunt force of power to accomplish our goals.

We must be ready at all times to be called to account for our lives, *especially* if we live them on virtuous grounds. **Virtue threatens and angers those whose own lives have been lived under the shadows of expediency and vice.**

Joan’s pure heart, committed to unselfish ends, **left us a legacy that while everyone dies, only a few really live. Oh, that more of us would live.**

#### PAUSE FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

***Take the long view. It is the most important piece of wisdom I can pass to you on your journey as a Centurion. Take the long view.***

## *In this world, the focus is upon short-term gains.*

If you want to be a Centurion, you need to base your decisions on something more permanent than the next . . .

**I am always reminded that I will one day meet my Maker.** How will I feel then about my decisions now? That forces me to take the long view. We who lead are reminded it is an awesome responsibility that too many take too lightly.

Joan began her journey as a young child by remembering to kneel and pray long before the first angel visited her with a commission. No person is so far down into the abyss that he cannot begin this journey.

I have “learned” to become *more* of a man of integrity as the years have passed. What I once did without thinking, now I wouldn’t even consider. What I once failed to do, now I strive with great passion to accomplish. **When I look back, I see the work of God over many years, and it encourages me to keep on pressing closer to Him.** I have a long way to go. The older I get, the more I realize how much farther that distance is.

**WE may not all have a destiny as memorable as Joan’s. But we can be Centurions who will be remembered by those we led and, most important, by the One who made us.**

### PATHWAYS TO INTEGRITY-BASED LEADERSHIP

I believed in a greater destiny than that which ruled by the tyranny of the moment. I began by taking the long view. I knew I was more accountable to a higher power than I was to a petty one.

**What are you doing today to enlarge those memories that will satisfy your heart about the worth and significance of your life?** That is where you begin.

But what about “fear”?

You can be driven by fear. Many are. But what if the worst fears above come true? **If you’re a Centurion, you’ll persevere until you overcome, and your family will watch you set an example they can follow. Most of all, you will still own your honor and self-respect. No one can take your honor from you. Only you can give it away.**

I believe a Destiny Shaper greater than I guides my steps, even when I’m flat on my back.

Take the small-step approach in constructing your leadership foundation on integrity. Tell those beneath you about it, and then encourage them to give you feedback when you fall short. You will have to be open to this kind of feedback, but it will communicate to everyone how serious you are about your commitment.

When you've talked and walked in the path long enough, your people will know it isn't just a passing fad. More importantly, many of them will want to live up to the example you set.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GEORGE WASHINGTON** **FIRST IN WAY, FIRST IN PEACE, FIRST** **IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN**

#### ***Motives empower or diminish leadership—what are yours?***

**WHAT GETS YOU OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING? WHAT comes into your mind when you first wake up?** What generates our energy and your enthusiasm about the day ahead?

As a leader, you can be sure that time and circumstances will uncover your motivations. ***A person's character doesn't as much rise to the occasion as it is revealed by the occasion. Throughout our lives we make decisions that form habits and a way of thinking.*** It's in the fire that gold is separated from the various worthless elements to which it has been joined for so long.

***Our motives reveal the depth or absence of our character.***

The thing that gets you moving in the morning will guide you through your day, reaping opinions about you that will form perceptions and a reputation—and it will be distinctly yours!

**This isn't an examination of Washington's battlefield or political exploits. Rather, it's a portrait of a man's decisions and motivations to take command repeatedly, seemingly against his better judgment, and certainly against his wishes.**

## **ENTRY TO WAR, 1775**

By early 1775 the colonists eventually came to understand the English cared little for their welfare and much for their wealth. While many respected the king, few supported the growing tax burden and inconvenience of housing and feeding his troops without compensation.

Washington was elected, along with seven others, to represent Virginia at the Continental Congress in August of 1774. The thinking of many in the Congress, they would have to fight.

**“Unhappy it is to reflect that a brother’s sword has been sheathed in a brother’s breast and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched in blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?”**

**“Can a virtuous man even hesitate to choose when all he loves will soon be enslaved?” For Washington the cornerstone of his decision was based on motives that flowed from a strong and virtuous character.**

Later that summer, the Continental Congress called him to take command of the entire Continental Army in the cause of the national defense. He had already been asked three times and politely declined each time.

There lay possible glory, rank and title, and a place in history—all the things so many crave. The question was, *what did George Washington see when he looked in the mirror each day?*

In spite of his reluctance to assume the role and leave his family at Mount Vernon, his sense of honor and duty to his fellow citizens was stronger.

Having disposed of power and money as motivations, what about glory? This is not as easily disproved because actions and decisions over time are better indicators of the true nature of a heart.

## THE WAR BEGINS

George Washington took the role of commander of all rebel forces. He stood a rope’s length away from death and defeated an enemy that was superior in training, equipment, and numbers.

The leaders of this emerging nation reached out for a leader—a king—who would benevolently rule them. “Every major nation in the world was then ruled by a king.”

**Here is one of those times when action, rather than words, best demonstrate the character of Washington.** He would be swept into the lap of luxury, the power of unequalled national office, and the fame that could cause even the humblest heart to quiver with excitement.

Washington was preoccupied with two other pressing concerns. The treatment of his valiant but weary army and their anger that they would be released to civilian life without recompense. Washington understood their well-founded concern. *It was not power that possessed his heart, but service.*

The Congress had bluntly notified Washington, “there were no further possibilities of supplying the army.” Washington was deeply moved by the condition of the army and the injustice they were facing. Time and again he was stymied by states that had no desire to fund the efforts and men who protected them.

On March 15, 1783, Washington summoned a meeting of his military leaders. The army, now on the edge of rebellion.

Washington stated that he believed the government would, “despite the slowness inherent in deliberative bodies,” in the end act justly.

His audience did not seem moved. He clearly had not achieved his end. Washington pulled from his pocket something only intimates had seen him wear; a pair of eyeglasses. “Gentlemen,” he said, “you will permit me to put on my spectacles for I have not only grown gray but almost blind in the service of my country.” This homely act and simple statement did what all Washington’s arguments had failed to do. The hardened soldiers wept. Washington saved the United States from the tyranny and civil discord that had concluded so many revolutions.

The army disbanded with only their muskets to take home. Washington’s farewell dinner was canceled. He appeared before Congress and graciously resigned his commission. Washington was now a civilian.

## **POLITICS OR PASTURES**

No one in the colonies, either military or civilian, held the esteem and the renown of Washington. And not nation on earth had seen a successful republic develop—a nation of the people, by the people, for the people. And few in the colonies wanted the same, even in the form of a strong central government. King George had taught them well to fear such power.

Upon returning to Mount Vernon, Washington faced the monumental task of rebuilding.

“American agricultural know-how began with one man, a farmer in Virginia who was the first man in the New World to rotate his crops. His harvest of wheat multiplied twenty-five times in five years . . . His coat of arms was changed to add wheat spikes to it as a result of his innovations. George Washington always remained, at heart, a farmer.” It was at the heart of what he loved—working the land in the company of his wife and family.

By 1786 the country had begun to come apart at the seams. Rebellions and uprisings were becoming more common and Congress had no way of keeping order. Washington's health had begun to fail in 1787, most likely malaria. The country was \$50 million in debt to foreign governments, yet it wasn't until 1789 that the Continental Congress called a session clearly recognizing the hour was grim. They asked Washington to attend. He finally agreed. Upon arriving, he discovered that the Congress had unanimously voted him as president—a title they had just devised. **The life Washington had loved and known was over. He had again taken, reluctantly, the burden of the nation on his shoulders.**

*“While he was in office, he was one of the most unpopular presidents to ever serve the United States. He was ridiculed in public print.* His Secretary of State resigned in disagreement over foreign policy. Two of his cabinet members quit and formed an opposing political party to fight him. There were riots in the streets, and Congress refused to give him an army to enforce the law. The United States was on the brink of a full-scale civil war. Predictably, scores of newspapers and many American patriots demanded his immediate resignation. *He declared: “I would rather be in the grave than in the Presidency.”*

*Motives empower or diminish leadership. It is the human condition to advance and protect ourselves.* Yet it is the unselfish, altruistic, and sacrificial person whom we admire. We will follow those people into the jaws of death. We see in their unselfishness the character we would have for ourselves. **Be the Centurion, start the battle to conquer the self-centered motives that we cling to for self-preservation.** Let self go, your Destiny Maker will call you in due season to put on the mantle of the role you were born to fulfill.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

Great leaders, who leave lasting achievements, find something deep inside that is being satisfied by what they are doing, giving, producing, or creating.

What caused him to risk the incredible respect and reputation he held among his countrymen after the war, to enter the brutal arena of national politics? The same thing that should motivate all leaders—the same thing that leaders should model and work to instill among their subordinates: *Work is the potential to leave behind something greater than ourselves.*

*It is not a right but a privilege—a gift even—to be wise enough, healthy enough, and sought after enough to get up each day and contribute to the world around us. Many are not so blessed.*

President Teddy Roosevelt so eloquently described:

“It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by the dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.”

So where do you stand? Serving greater ends or self-serving? Perhaps you fall somewhere in between. *You have been given a moment in time and a position of the power of the Almighty to influence, create, and produce something that could benefit the world around you. Are you living up to that great calling?*

**Be sure of this; there will come moments in the course of your life when the fires are heated beneath you and all will know what is in your heart. Are you ready to risk all in the cause of something greater than yourself and your family?** All leaders will be called to sacrifice greatly for something greater than themselves.

*It is in the heat of great personal crisis that our motives and our values are tested for their strength and fidelity...*

Daniel Boone blazed the trail to the West, cutting his way through the wilderness and opening up the territories to hundreds of thousands who would follow, yet died penniless. Does that mean he wasn't successful?

*Money is a poor measure of success.* Seek to fulfill your calling the thing that sparks your spirit, and pursue that passion with all the strength you've been given. *When you turn back at the end of your days, you will understand the difference between a mundane life spent pursuing money, fame, and power or a magnificent life that served far greater ends.*

## PATHWAY TO LEADERSHIP THAT SERVES GREATER ENDS

*The greatest leaders were also great risk takers.* Decide if you are willing to become that kind of leader. If not move on to the next chapter. Risking is costly. *If it wasn't, everyone would be doing it.*

The key to getting beyond the illusions of fame, money, and power is to take the long view.

*If you take the long view, you will inevitably run up against the fear mongers and the self-serving. You will fight against the tide of those who want to “just get by,” and you will have very few joining you as you seek triumph in breakthroughs rather than monetary results.*

*Is it hard? Yes. Is it impossible? No.*

Washington regretted having taken on the role of president at points, but I also believe that at the end of his life, he had no doubts that he had fulfilled a higher calling than the one he had hoped for in working on Mount Vernon.

Isn't it about time you begin the journey you were born for? Isn't it time to start seeking a service that motivates you and energizes you to serve a higher calling each day? *If you are courageous enough, you will find that one day you have left more than a memory behind you—you have left a legacy.*

## CHAPTER 6

### ANDREW JACKSON OLD HICKORY BRINGS THE COMMON MAN TO THE WHITE HOUSE

We've been searching for a church, we wandered into one of those “is it a mall or is it a church?” kind of places this past week.

Toward the end of the service, in which I had been repeatedly told we're all going to be winners, “Excuse me, I'm successful,” the pastor asked all those under twenty-five to stand up. He looked at them all and said, “I want you to know that we believe in you. Many of you are one day going to . . .” I almost fell out of my seat when he finished it “. . . start business, be very successful, and be champions.” I wasn't sure whether I was in a church or a meeting of investors.

*If you don't want to get down into the trenches with the people who are giving their blood for you, if you don't want to help them up when they fall on their faces, if you don't want to share your own failures and encourage them that tomorrow will be better, then you have no business in leadership (or pastoring a church).*



If you haven't failed or lost at anything and you have no respect for anyone who does, you have never risked greatly in your life. **If Thomas Edison could fill up a two-story building with burned-out filaments for two years before he found the right combination of metals, what does that say about the human condition? It tells me that for 729 days I am going to be struggling with one problem or another until I finally find the solution on day 730. And that's only if I am persistent and courageous enough to struggle until that day comes.**

***This subject is so vitally important. Like it or not, pain and suffering, failing and falling, are parts of the human condition.***

Your challenge—not only to believe it is possible, but to inject it into those who are looking to you for direction. You can't and shouldn't ignore the pain or the suffering, but you sure can lead people to where they always wanted to go but never knew they could. That brings us to an uncouth man with muddy boots people called “Andy” Jackson.

Coming from European stock, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and those of the new American aristocracy were the logical choices as leaders. As the decades passed, the wisdom of that deference was seen in the policies and direction they provided—they were the strong rudders on a ship that needed the firm hand of a seasoned captain.

But the country's makeup changed. More than a million immigrants a year were landing on the shores and making their way to the outlying territories. There was land to be had for the hardy and the brave. It was a period of unprecedented development of machinery that would lead America into the Industrial Age. Americans began to look more toward leaders who were like themselves, who had seen the face of hardship and had survived it.

There was a growing distrust in the old aristocracy that appeared to be increasingly out of touch with these mainstream problems.

Andrew Jackson seemed to be a man who matched the tenor of the times. He was born into a poor family. As a courier during the Revolutionary War, he was captured by the British and held prisoner, later bearing the mark of a British sword on his head for refusing to shine boots.

By sixteen he was orphaned, having lost what money he inherited in one week of gambling, he swore never to be burdened with debt again. So he took up as a frontier lawyer. He was good at it, attracting large crowds to hear his impassioned pleas.

Jackson rose up to assume a judgeship where he was known for telling juries, “Do what is right; that is what the law always means.” ***He was a tough but fair judge and earned that reputation using his pistols when necessary.***

He continued to rise, being elected to the Tennessee Superior Court, the highest court in the state. Later he filled a seat in Congress. Thomas Jefferson said of him, "He is a dangerous man." He had a hard time spending entire days sitting in session listening to others make long speeches. By April of 1798, he had enough and resigned his Senate seat.

Jackson came home and began to build a plantation. He continued to serve as a judge, but it was a military commander where his name became a household word. **The year of 1812 was upon the nation. There was a lack of strong American leadership that was apparent to friend and foe as the British hijacked American vessels and crews at will.**

Jackson aspired to the post of major general of Tennessee's militia. At the age of thirty-five, Jackson added major general to his titles.

### **THE END OF APPEASEMENT, THE RISE OF JACKSON, 1812**

President James Madison's policy of compromise and conciliation regarding the growing aggressiveness of British military actions against American interests had failed. A transoceanic conflict would prove whether America was capable of defending itself against a far superior military and political power.

Congress authorized Madison to call up fifty thousand volunteers in the event of an emergency. The nation itself was hopelessly ill prepared for war. The available officers were aging generals of the Revolution . . . The US Navy consisted of six frigates and seven sloops [while] Great Britain could blockage the coast with one thousand ships and transport an army of one hundred thousand to reconquer her North American colonies."

**While Congress debated the issues of war and peace, Jackson began drilling his seven hundred troops.** The war was overwhelmingly opposed in the East with Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Delaware voting unanimously for peace. The representatives of the West and South, known as the "War Hawks" championed the vote that declared America was at war.

The one redeeming feature for America between 1812 and 1814 was that Europe was also dealing with the conquests of vast territories by Napoleon. In spite of that, Britain displayed an awesome armada of men and ships off the eastern coastline and in the Great lakes region in the opening months of the war.

The governor of Tennessee offered the services of up to four thousand men under the command of Jackson to serve anywhere needed. The War Department accepted Tennessee's men, but refused to appoint Jackson to serve as their general.

Meanwhile, the war opened with disasters on the Great lakes where Detroit was surrendered without a shot. Things grew worse when the Indians joined the British and attacked army forts

in Indiana and the British navy began blockading North Carolina in the fall. Further setbacks occurred in January 1813, when the British and Indians massacred helpless, wounded Americans in Michigan. By the last week of January, the British extended their blockage to the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. It was then that Jackson was finally called upon to take his men south to Natchez, Mississippi.

The call came not from the War Department, but from Governor Blount of Tennessee. Blount commissioned Jackson a major general and sent him to serve at New Orleans under James Wilkinson—a man of questionable loyalty to the Union.

**Jackson had seen that the men were drilled extensively and were well equipped. The general spent as much of his own money as the state supplied to outfit, clothe, and feed the troops.**

All of Jackson's troops were riflemen with significant skill; he refused to accept any but those who carried the lone-barreled rifles.

**Many were capable of hitting targets up to three hundred yards away. Jackson noted, "Smooth-bore muskets don't carry straight. They may be good enough for Regular Soldiers, but not the Citizen Volunteers of Tennessee."**

He received his first order from the new secretary of war, John Armstrong—"disband and turn over your equipment to General Wilkinson." A curt thank you for your service ended the message.

Jackson was furious at the thought that he should disband his men some eight hundred miles from home. To walk home to Tennessee without equipment and fend for themselves while traveling through dangerous Indian territory.

He told his men he would get them home even if they had to eat the horses to do it. "He hired eleven wagons to carry his sick men, obligating himself to pay ten dollars a day for each wagon to and from Tennessee. All told he drew drafts for twelve thousand dollars.

**He gave up his own three horses to carry sick and walked all the way back to Tennessee. He ceaselessly walked back and forth among the men encouraging them, ensuring the sick were taken care of and that all received enough food. One of his soldiers made an offhand comment that was to stick to Jackson for life. He said, "He's tough—tough as old hickory."**

His heroic journey home and the costs he bore made the name "Old Hickory" a common household phrase across the south. In Washington, the government auditors refused to honor Jackson's drafts for the transportation of his troops.

As 1813 passed into 1814, the British navy blockaded the eastern seaboard and around the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi and then finally all of the northeastern states. **The U.S. faced a dark future when the British burned Washington in the summer of 1814.** The president and Congress fled the Capitol.

James Monroe took over for an exhausted James Madison and sacked the ineffective Secretary of War Armstrong. He called for a vigorous defense of the country. Monroe managed to find one hundred thousand dollars to send to Jackson to raise an army to defend the South against the expected British invasion.

**In Europe, Britain had finally dispensed with Napoleon, and many of its veteran soldiers and sailors were now available to enlarge their presence in America.**

In the South, the British were enlisting growing numbers of Indians, drilling them and promising them ten dollars for every American scalp. The Spanish territory in Florida was fertile ground for the British. While the Spanish asserted their neutrality in Washington, they allowed the British and Indian forces to train and grow in strength.

Fresh from defeating the might Creek Indian nation that had wreaked havoc and atrocities on a number of occasions, Jackson and his cavalry leader General John Coffee, brought twenty-eight hundred soldiers on horseback.

Jackson wrote Monroe and warned him he was about to invade Spanish territory: “Pensacola has assumed the character of British Territory. I feel confident that I shall stand justified to my government.”

Jackson left Mobile and New Orleans with few defenses and took three thousand men, arriving in Pensacola four days later. Jackson encircled the city and attacked from the east. The governor came into the street with a white flag. The Creeks and Seminoles—terrified of the reputation of Jackson—fled into the wilderness, deserting the British. The British fleet destroyed its own Fort Barrancas and put out to sea.

The nation’s Federalist press cranked out denunciations of Jackson’s raid as a gross violation of the territory of a friendly power. Monroe himself was shocked that Jackson had recklessly left New Orleans and Mobile virtually undefended. Congress, began an investigation into Jackson’s conduct. **Jackson had more enemies than friends in Washington.**

Jackson’s raid raised the morale of his troops as he pressed his men to return to Mobile in three and one-half days.

The general himself rode 170 miles with little rest to New Orleans to raise defenses against the British.

## THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

He entered New Orleans with a small staff of six; he looked every inch the weary warrior. He was greeted warmly by the French leaders, who held a dinner in his honor. The city gathered General Jackson spoke “I have come to protect the city. I will drive our enemies into the sea or perish in the effort . . . you must all rally around me, cease all differences and divisions, and join in the patriotic resolve to save this city from dishonor and disaster.”

The city had raised some fifteen hundred volunteers, some who had fought under Napoleon. But it was a far cry from the forces needed to face the ten thousand British troops that were expected to arrive. Jackson said nothing of his disappointment and concern.

**Jackson then began vigorously to recruit Louisiana’s black freedmen. He offered the same benefits offered to white soldiers--\$124 and 160 acres of land.**

While the initial engagements were won by the British and seemed to strike fear into the heart of the city, Jackson knew the test was still to come.

It was miserably cold, and disinformation was spread by Jackson and all in the area that the city’s forts were ill prepared and barely defended. The British navy began the enormous task of disembarking most of its sailors into shallow transport vessels and rowing them to land where the major battle would occur. Jackson’s best opportunity with his limited forces was to prepare an impenetrable defensive line rather than try to intercept and engage the British out in the open. Other troops began to join Jackson now that the British had passed Mobile as the place for the primary battle.

In Washington, the mood was somber, and the entire country waited nervously. All were aware of what was at stake in New Orleans. The sense in the capital was that Jackson would be overwhelmed by a numerically superior and better-trained adversary.

Seven thousand men facing Jackson’s three thousand. Beyond sheer numbers the British troops were better trained and possessed greater combat experience, nearly unchallenged naval support, GLORIOUS NEWS the Americans to their knees and back into servitude to the Crown. After hours of bombardment, the British failed to silence the American guns or create a breach in the American lines.

The effect on British morale was significant as the battle dragged on for almost a week. Finally, Pakenham committed his infantry to the assault. The American long rifles waited for firing commands, while Jackson’s cannons began to tear large holes in the advancing British lines. Now, at a distance of three hundred yards, Jackson’s highly skilled marksmen began to pick off large numbers of infantry. **Whole British regiments disappeared in the withering and**

**accurate fire. Every mounted British officer was killed or wounded in the first minutes of this final battle.**

Pakenham himself was shot through the throat. “Commands to reform ranks and attack were ignored by redcoats whose nerve was broken . . . Jackson lost 13 dead and 39 wounded, 19 missing action. The British: 291 killed, 1,262 wounded, 484 captured or missing.”

## **ALMOST INCREDIBLE VICTORY**

GLORIOUS NEWS  
RISING GLORY OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC  
GLORIOUS!!  
UNPARALLELED VICTORY

***The news of New Orleans raised the spirit of America out of the ashes in Washington D. C., and a dozen other places where the British had overwhelmed the poorly organized and undersized American militias.*** This victory made Jackson’s name the most celebrated name in the Union.

## **PRESIDENT JACKSON? VICTORY, DEFEAT, AND THEN, VICTORY**

Jackson was courted by many to consider running for the presidency.

Appointed to the governorship of Florida in 1821, Jackson dealt with many issues relating to conflicts, and often in a way that made enemies since he possessed precious little diplomacy. Yet it was this same drive and “never say die” attitude that had become the heartbeat of the new America. Jackson personified the feelings of a growing number of his countrymen that Washington needed a change from the old aristocracy to men who had risen from the soil. The older, established circles of Washington power were ill at the thought of a man like Jackson becoming their president.

In the election of 1824, Jackson won the popular vote and garnered the largest number of electoral votes. He had ninety-nine electoral votes, while John Quincy Adams had eighty-four, William Crawford had forty-one, and Henry Clay had thirty-seven. Because no candidate had a majority of the electoral college, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives.

Henry Clay ultimately turned the election by taking his votes and throwing his support to John Adams—son of the second president. The House voted thirteen states for Adams, seven for Jackson, and four for Crawford. In return Adams appointed Henry Clay as his secretary of state

and the nation was inflamed by the seeming “stolen presidency”. Jackson had won the popular vote and the largest number of electoral votes, but still lost the election.

Remarkably, his supporters continued to work in Congress during a largely ineffectual Adams administration, and Jackson did not wait for the Adams-Clay faction to fall apart.”

**Jackson just wouldn’t quit. He learned from what cost him the first election and built political alliances and continued fighting for the interests of what was termed “the common man.”** By the next presidential election, Jackson was swept into the office.

Jackson’s popularity brought thousands of supporters. He let pioneers, backwoodsmen, old soldiers, and immigrants into the newly built White House. *It was the age of the common man and, literally, muddy boots in the White House.*

Jackson’s persistence saw him successfully through two terms in office in a period of history that was accurately referred to as “the rise of the common man.”

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY’S CENTURIONS

As a rising Centurion, you can love about Jackson that in spite of his imperfections, he was a forerunner of the movie hero Rocky—all guts and heart and a never-say-die attitude. He just kept rising from the canvas to fight again—and he kept getting smarter each time he fought to overcome another defeat. But *Jackson possessed inner qualities that earned him the love of people around him.* He honored others who displayed courage and persistence.

### STUBBORNNESS ISN’T THE SAME AS PERSISTENCE

*Stubborn* is defined as “stiff; unbending; unyielding; persistent; hence, unreasonably obstinate in will or opinion; not yielding to reason or persuasion.”

**Stubbornness is refusing to listen to anyone who disagrees with you, which is not the same as persistence.** *If you can’t defend your course of action with more than bluster, rage, or standing upon your rank or position—you demonstrate the stubbornness of a jackass rather than the persistence of a Centurion.* The world is overrun by a herd of the one while the other is as rare as a speechless politician.

### PERSISTENCE IS PAINFUL

**Don’t believe for a moment that the Centurion quality of persistence is going to earn you the admiration and praise of all those below and above you. On the contrary, you will most likely be skewered out of earshot, and you will be the butt of jokes from those afraid to oppose you publicly.**

*Expedience and compromise, especially upon issues touching virtue, honor, and integrity, are the norm and expected behavior for today. Persisting in your principles in living out your life is discomfoting to those who blow with the wind.*

*Persistence is best understood when you watch the person pay the price for staying the course while everyone else is making what is viewed as the “smart play,” or worse, “the safe play.”*

*I’ve watched a lot of talented people fail because they lacked the quality of persistence. Edison’s axiom was that genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. You don’t perspire the moment you start.*

*Persist and keep on persisting.*

It doesn’t take great talent to do what we do, but it does take persistence.

*There are two primary reasons that most endeavors fail; they aren’t begun, or they aren’t finished. Centurions certainly begin, and they refuse to be distracted by lesser aims and goals—holding on for the greater prize. It’s why we remember the Centurions and forget the “managers.”*

I return to inspiring examples of persistence to help me remember this when the battle is under way and when the winds of discouragement cause me to want to throw in the towel.

*Winston Churchill* asked to address the students of Harrow, his alma mater. A hush came over the crowd, and he said, “Never, never, never . . . give up.” Then he returned to take his seat.

*Will Rogers* said, “Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

*Bjorn Borg* the great tennis player “My greatest point is my persistence. I never give up in a match.

*Helen Keller* born both blind and deaf. Yet, learned to speak through sign language, wrote eight books, and eventually graduated from Radcliffe College.

*Raoul Wallenberg*, Everyone dies, yet few really ever live. Raoul Wallenberg lives on today, and so do more than one hundred thousand Jews whose parents received Wallenberg passports.

*If your work, dreams, goals, and visions can’t stand the winds of a good argument, you probably should listen harder or adjust your sails.*



## PATHWAYS OF THE PERSISTENT CENTURION

*Persistence means valuing your purpose more than caring about who values you. That takes character.* Have you spent any time developing the qualities of Centurion honor—the kind where you risk everything, persisting to the end because you know what you are doing is right?

Persistence means you have a vision, have been given a vision, or have developed a vision that consumes your waking moments.

Finally, persistence means you are capable of enduring suffering and doubt and derision and even hate. *People who are persistent threaten those whose character is too weak to develop this Centurion quality.* The Centurion, must press forward. You will be a world shaper, a culture changer, and maybe even a mountain mover. With Centurions, you can never tell.

### CHAPTER 7

#### GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

*There will never be enough—money, resources, people, time,  
or information—make the decision anyway*

In the military, as in highly competitive markets, those who delay are effectively standing still, because the result is the same—they are surpassed, become irrelevant, and are ultimately absorbed by their fast-moving opponents.

*Decision making is a key element of success and should be integral to evaluating leaders for increased responsibility and promotion.* There are tendencies, traits, and habits that are revealing precursors to both success and failure. This was certainly the case in the person of George B. McClellan.

#### PREPARATION FOR LEADERSHIP—WEST POINT TO MEXICO

**George McClellan had many outstanding qualities. Yet from the beginning, making decisions wasn't one of them.** Self-doubts plagued McClellan, and he responded by assigning

blame for failure to subordinate and superior alike. *What he could not grasp, was that indecision, delayed decisions, and no decisions are decisions.*

McClellan was only fifteen and a half when he arrived at the Point.

**One first insight into the young man's character and personality suggests a vacancy in relationships—a sense of alienation that would follow him throughout his life.** His instructors would note that McClellan was very bright, but his performance was only average when he was uninterested—even when he possessed above-average intelligence in those areas. By the end of that first year, McClellan ranked in the top 10 while “Stonewall” Jackson would struggle to find his way into the Top 60.

**As head of the Dialectic Society, he was given the honor of presenting the graduation address.** He quoted Napoleon extensively, and was soon referred to as “the young Napoleon.” Even though he graduated second in his class, it was a situation he found difficult to swallow. A ghost rider seemed to accompany him his whole life, whispering, “You’ve been mistreated again.” Leaving West Point, he was given his choice of assignments.

Meanwhile, the U.S. was engaged in a heated war with Mexico. His opinion of the volunteers was they were inept and unreliable.

His attitude about the war was much as he’d expressed it in his graduation address; he saw it as an activity of grand adventure. He wrote “I could live such a life for years and years without becoming tired of it . . . You never saw such a merry set as we are—no care, no trouble—we criticize the Generals—laugh and swear at the mustangs and volunteers, smoke our cigars and drink our brandy.”

McClellan demonstrated considerable courage in the campaigns of Mexico. He was neither shy nor prudent with his declaration. He seemed pernicious rather than constructive.

There were lessons that he could have learned, but didn’t, while in the field with General Scott.

### **FROM LIMBO TO METEORIC RISE**

He often defended himself by explaining disputes as a difference of opinion, a distaste for incompetent leadership, or an insult to his honor and superior competence.

He managed to escape West Point and began a series of expeditions for the army, which had assumed the task of searching out a route for a continental railway passage across the Rockies.

He settled on “indecision” and said there wasn’t a suitable passage. In his final report, McClellan blamed a dry winter and a fluke that allowed the other party to find a way through.

He was finally called to return to Washington and shortly after given an assignment in Kansas keeping the peace between “free states and slave states.” He considered this a disgusting prospect. He resigned his commission after being offered a post in the Illinois Central Railroad.

He was an excellent administrator and was promoted to vice president within a year. True to his nature, he began to fight with his superiors over every instruction they gave him. He was unhappy in his position, and he looked for and found another opportunity at the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad. Within a year he became its president.

President-elect Lincoln would not take office for ten more weeks but was putting out a call for officers. He considered McClellan as one of the bright stars and considered him for command as a brigadier general. He was also being courted by the governors of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York to command their troops. He began his Civil War service as major general of Ohio’s volunteer army in the western theater of operations. He was thirty-four years old. The choice gave him the highest possible rank, even though he was forced to lead “volunteers.”

### **MCCLELLAN’S STAR ENGAGES AFTERBURNERS**

He was only out ranked by the general in chief himself, Winfield Scott.

With such auspicious beginnings, we would expect nothing less than auspicious ends.

Start off well he did. He was a prodigious worker and rode from one camp to another. Yet the same problems evident earlier beset him once again.

While the war raged in the eastern theater, he insisted that his area was critical and in crisis as he demanded more of everything. **In the first battle engagements in eastern Tennessee, his movements were tentative and his orders vague.** The confusion so evident in the execution of his battle plan led him to write Washington, saying, “In heaven’s name give me some general officers who understand their profession. He pinned all the blame for his first less-than-stellar Civil War engagement upon one of his subordinate commanders.

McClellan was recalled to the East and assigned to command the division of the Potomac, and the defenses around Washington.

In keeping with his pattern, he threw himself into his work, personally supervising everything, trusting no one else to measure up to his expectations. He again came to loggerheads with his superior. He courted the press.

He wrote and spoke to everyone who would listen that General Scott had no cohesive strategy and he alone could lead the army in a grand sweep across the South.

Even though his numbers bore no semblance to reality, the young Napoleon had shouted loud and long enough to be heard.

McClellan had stirred so much public sentiment that Lincoln was convinced that a change was needed, and Scott, ever the gentleman, offered his resignation. On November 1, 1861, McClellan was designed by the president to command the entire Army of the North. It was everything he ever wanted.

### **SHINING STAR TO TRANISHING STAR— INDECISION, INACTION, AND WASTE**

McClellan, as usual, threw himself into the new tasks. He continued his habit of creating a black cloud of doubt while escaping his own culpability and letting his superiors take the blame.

As the months passed, one opportunity after another slipped through his grasp. He hesitated, there was always something that prevented him from being able to achieve his ends—and the blame always lay elsewhere.

As the months passed, pressure on McClellan began to mount from all sides.

Lincoln tried every way imaginable to get his general to take the offensive. In spite of Lincoln's diplomatic approach, McClellan's attacked his superior for all the failings that were most certainly his own. He began to write, as was his habit, to any who would listen or print his diatribes:

“The President is an idiot . . .”

“The President is nothing more than a well meaning baboon.”

“I went to the White House where I found ‘the original gorilla.’ What a specimen to be at the head of our affairs now.”

“The President coolly telegraphed me yesterday that he thought I had better break the enemy's lines at once! I was much tempted to reply that he had better come and do it himself.”

As Lady Macbeth continually washed her hands, never quite getting the stains off, so McClellan nursed his wounds in disdain, spite, and blame.

### **LAST CHANCE, LOST OPPORTUNITY— ANTIETAM, SEPTEMBER 1862**

In contrast to McClellan, Lee spent no time bemoaning his fate of being outnumbered. He immediately redeployed his army defensively to await the arrival of his right arm, Stonewall Jackson. McClellan arrived in force putting Lee's back against the Potomac. Yet being ever cautious, he spent another day and a half arranging his troops and getting all in "perfect" order. "This was a grievous error, as it gave Lee time to gather up all his troops and establish a formidable line."

Lee ably used the time to choose his position of defense. Forcing the North to cross one of three bridges to get at him, this put the Union Army in very deadly and narrow fields of fire.

As September 16 wore on no orders came from HQ, and McClellan continued with administrative tasks. McClellan's vague communications left commanders wondering about their responsibilities. **McClellan spoke of a great victory pushing Lee into the Potomac, yet all his troop movements were made with defense in mind, hoping to avoid defeat rather than pursuing that ever-elusive phantom called "victory."**

The extra day allowed three of Jackson's divisions to arrive at Antietam. Delaying the battle until sunrise on September 17 allowed two more of Jackson's divisions to arrive ready to fight. By 9:00 A.M., his last division arrived and marched into position.

The day and a half of delay cost McClellan his only chance to hit Lee while his army was divided. 115,000 men fought in what proved to be the bloodiest single day of the war.

**Hooked launched the battle on Lee's left, at dawn on September 17, while his boss McClellan stayed in bed for two hours, believing the noise to be the rebels withdrawing across the Potomac.**

**That day, every Federal action was fought in uncoordinated movements.** The only thing troops and commanders could do was react to what was happening in front of them.

Northern casualties were severe.

Then, without reason, the South began to evacuate.

Richardson exploited this confusion in the Southern ranks. The opportunity to cut Lee's army in half was at hand when Richardson was mortally wounded. His replacement arrived from McClellan's headquarters with orders to stand fast and hold the position. The Union's chance to exploit the advantage was soon lost as Lee quickly reinforced his center.

**McClellan felt they had done well and extracted in blood at least as many men as he himself had lost. He sent a victory telegram. It fell on deaf ears.** It was greater blow to the South to lose so many men, but it was a moral victory to have survived while being outgunned

and outnumbered a fact not lost on Lincoln. **McClellan was ordered to advance, but he delayed two days** and in that interval Lee and all of his troops vanished. McClellan fell back to reorganize, retain, and call for more troops and supplies.

McClellan seemed to see a world ruled by randomness lifting up men like Lincoln, while debilitating and destabilizing men like himself. Malaise and growing depression seemed to cover him. **His long delay after Antietam was the last straw. Lincoln sent a telegram on November 5, 1862, relieving him of his command.**

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

Most indecisive executives don't even know they lack the ability to pull the decision trigger.

Rather than be decisive, they heed the call of the “five sirens of delay.” Siren songs play to our primordial instinct for safety and fears, ever reminding leaders that their decision risks their own safety, success, and future. The five deadly songs tell us:

1. **“You’re risking too much; you’ll end in disaster.”—Leaders who fall prey to this call are more afraid of making the wrong decision than no decision, believing no decision is much safer.** The result of this choice is an organization that remains stationary waiting for perfect battlefield conditions rather than seeking out opportunities and exploiting them.
2. **“You don’t have enough authority.”—Often a leader has the authority, but is afraid to exercise it. In those cases, leaders will send the decision up-channel to a supervisor.**
3. **“You don’t have enough information.”** With more time comes more information and better information provides the basis for a better decision. But some leaders fall into the habit of waiting indefinitely. However, the passage of time also commonly changes the circumstances, which puts a decision maker right back where he started.
4. **“You don’t have enough time.” Many leaders are comfortable making decisions at a certain pace.** When forced to decide without that minimum time, they freeze. These leaders seem to be standing still as battle and business swiftly evolve. The decision-making cycle has seen a frightening acceleration—in many cases necessitating an instant decision or instant failure. It is a cycle that never slows down or retreats—you play or pay.
5. **“You don’t have enough resources.” Human beings can achieve greater ends than they realize. With even a modest amount of resources and the right kind of leadership, organizations have accomplished what was previously believed impossible.** Those who succumb to this siren song find that they never seem to have enough. One side faced its shortcomings and built a bridge over its dears while its opponent did not.

*There are sirens calling out “delay, defer, but don’t made a decision.” It takes a clear understanding of the burden of leadership to act because you must, even in the absence of the things leaders want most—more money, people, resources, time, and information.*

*Every leader has weaknesses.* Few leaders are self-aware enough to know their own while even fewer surround themselves with people who can offset those weaknesses.

*No leader has all the answers. It is “in the counsel of many that even a fool can become wise” and where leaders become Centurions.*

*Delayed decisions and no decisions have consequences as powerful as rendered decisions.*

*No leader can remove the bull’s-eye from his back until he removes the mantle of leadership from his shoulders.* Knowing that controversy or even failure will one day knock on your door isn’t better to have chosen the path yourself rather than be driven into the ditch by others?

## PATHWAYS TO CENTURION DECISION MAKING

In the case of McClellan, in his rise and subsequent fail, there appears to be an undercurrent of failure tugging at his feet even though his head is ever lifted up to the lofty heights of power. The undercurrent is fed by self-doubt, indecision, and blame shifting. **To recognize solvable problems is the beginning of reaching the means to overcome them. The keys rest in dealing with the sirens of delay.**

The Centurion understands. No person ever accomplished great feats without great risks or great sacrifice. *The risks we perceive as so great may, in fact, be the ordinary stepping-stones that lead across previously impassable and trouble waters.*

When we risk the Centurion will be second-guessed by those who stand smugly along the sidelines.

*As a Centurion, you are called to both risk and achieve—both key ingredients to final success.*

An encouraging word can accomplish as much as a sharp spur. There are surely moments when the spur is called for, but far less than is commonly thought.

**The last sirens—lack of authority, information, time, and resources—all boil down to excuses we use to delay or neglect the necessity of a decision.**

We suffer today, not so much from a lack of information, but from an overabundance of useless unfocused information that isn’t pertinent to the current crisis. *Find the means to cull the useless from the relevant.* It is no easy task, yet it is a critical task in this rapidly developing

information age. *Focus on putting out a workable solution today while the battle is raging, rather than a perfect solution that will be wholly irrelevant tomorrow? You will always lack enough resources to do the job perfectly.*

“Necessity is the mother of invention”? You’ll never know what you can do until you are stretched.

It is a wise leader who knows not to listen to the counsel of the sirens of fear. Decisiveness is the bedrock foundation. When leaders can’t or won’t *make the tough call*, or are incapable of making it, they take the steam out of the engine of their company’s progress.

*Clearly, leaders face the danger of failure every time that make decisions. The successful ones learn to build an organization of people willing to climb mountains because their leaders will blaze the trail, shoulder the blame, and help them achieve their dreams. When you can do this, you will no longer be their manager—you will be their Centurion.*

## CHAPTER 8

### GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Some may be surprised by the inclusion of Robert E. Lee among the great Centurions in history.

There was scarce dissent about the character of Robert E. Lee following the bloodiest war in this nation’s history. His chaplain summed up the nation’s feelings on Lee after the war: *“He was a foe without hate; a friend without treachery; a private citizen without wrong; a neighbor without reproach; a Christian without hypocrisy, and a man without guilt. He was a Caesar without his ambition; a Frederick without his tyranny; a Napoleon without his selfishness; and a Washington without his reward.”*

Lee’s genealogy can be traced back to Richard the Lionhearted. He is honored today with a statue alongside George Washington in the U.S. Capitol rotunda.



*We use the word “great” indiscriminately, but we reserve the word “noble” carefully for those whose greatness is not spent in their own interest—that was the characteristic of General Lee’s life. (President Woodrow Wilson).*

Robert E. Lee was Lincoln’s first choice to lead the Northern Army against the rising tide of states seceding from the Union.

In a world in search of Centurions, we are hard pressed to find a better example than Lee of the quality of boldness—particularly among leaders who, from a position of weakness, are capable of exhibiting a strength that renders their adversaries impotent again and again. Few like Lee could get inside the mind of his adversary, bluff repeatedly and successfully, strike and then move massive numbers of troops in minimum time, strike again, and all while being outnumbered between two-to-one and four-to-one.

Boldness may seem foolish, yet boldness may be the one advantage you have over a larger and less agile opponent. *You may have less muscle, so you will need more brains.*

### **BEYOND INITIAL BRAVADO—SETTING THE STAGE FOR LEE’S COMMAND**

It is useless to judge anyone by the boldness of his plans. *It is more instructive to wait until enough time has brought about both the blush of victory and the disappointment of defeat to evaluate the quality of boldness within the heart of a Centurion.* *Boldness is the courage to risk greatly in spite of the odds, understanding the consequences and gravity of defeat at the hands of a capable and committed opponent.*

Hotheads and blowhards; those who never experience the sound and fury of battle or know the suffering that follow it. Lee remarked, “We appointed all the worst generals to command the army and all our best generals to edit the newspapers.”

### **OVER THE PRECIPICE—THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH TO BATTLE**

Within three months of Lincoln’s election seven states seceded from the Union, and six more would follow. Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand troops to put down the insurrection. General McDowell was given command of the Union Army and ordered to take Richmond, the seat of the newly formed Confederate government.

*“Boldness sharpens the sword.”* - Ancient Saying

President Jefferson Davis could no longer afford to have Robert E. Lee as his senior strategist and war planner sitting in Richmond. He sent him to take over command of the Army.

**Lee first ordered all his forces to retreat and re-form around the outskirts of Richmond.** From there he directed efforts to strengthen the city's defenses, streamlined the organization of the Southern command structure, and replenished his troops with supplies and weapons. Lee was well aware of the vast advantage in manpower McClellan held over him. He knew with enough time, McClellan would wear his troops down if they continued to tighten the ring around Richmond. Lee wasted no time. He drew up offensive battle plans, and attacked. Though McClellan never believed it, he outnumbered Lee by 120,000 facing Lee's forty thousand.

The Seven Days Battle was costly for the South with fifteen thousand killed and wounded compared to the North's eight thousand. Still the battle was seen in the North and South as a Southern victory.

Richmond was no longer threatened; the North had fallen back each day and morale drained away with every mile the Union Army retreated. Playing "not to lose" plagued General McClellan.

### **THE SECOND BATTLE OF MANASSAS—LEE CALCULATES AND CHOOSES 'BOLDNESS'**

Lee's strategy was to remain on the offensive and dictate rather than let the battle come to him.

*War has a way of quickly defining both the small and the great and accelerates the refining process to reveal an individual's inner core at a pace that peacetime rarely discloses.* The remaining Civil War years only served to reinforce what was shown during Lee's first six-month tenure as commander. *It is always under pressure that Centurions are revealed and pretenders are unmasked.*

Lee had settled on General Jackson and General Longstreet as his two "go-to" leaders.

He sent word to Jackson not to await opportunity, but to seek it out—not to expect detailed orders, but to initiate and attack wherever the moment presented itself. His approach was to instill boldness in his senior leaders by giving them sufficient latitude for independent action—and the expectation that they would take it.

**Within a few days Jackson took Pope's supply depot at Manassas and burned it, while Jeb Stuart, Lee's cavalry commander, raided Pope's camp itself.**

Lee realized the Union Army had shown an aversion to risk. He would try to use that to his advantage.

Lee's army feat was even more remarkable considering the state of his soldiers. When asked why he didn't pursue Pope all the way to Washington, Lee replied, "Because my men had nothing to eat. I couldn't tell my men to take a fort when they had nothing to eat for three days. I [had to] go to Maryland to feed my army."

***"The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion."***

- Proverbs 28:1

At Richmond, upon assuming command, Lee could have set up a defensive perimeter and tried to hold out against the North. **He didn't. He set up defenses and then launched a bold offensive.** At the second battle of Bull Run, Lee was outnumbered and outmaneuvered. Instead of retreating or setting up a quick defense, Lee ordered Longstreet and Jackson to take the offensive against the numerically superior Pope. **Lee's actions were irrational according to his opponent.** **Again and again, Lee would use audacity and boldness while holding a weaker hand. It was the kind of leadership Lincoln continued to search for until he found General U.S. Grant.**

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

Some view boldness as exuding an external bravado. For those whose tendency is to rule arbitrarily and by authority of their rank or position, boldness is not.

- Boldness is not loud, noisily defiant, or aggressively boisterous words or actions.
- Bold leadership is not swaggering bravado.
- Boldness is not rudeness.
- Boldness is not "forget the facts, damn the torpedoes, and full speed ahead."
- Boldness is not "shoot now and let God sort them out."

**Centurion boldness is the courage to risk greatly in spite of the odds, understanding the consequences and gravity of defeat at the hands of a capable and committed opponent.**

### **BOLDNESS REQUIRES TRUST**

**Boldness requires vertical and horizontal trust. Those above you must have the stomach to allow you to pursue your vision to accomplish their ends. And those with you and serving you must be willing to follow you because they respect you and believe in you.** You must build their confidence in you through sustained performance that demonstrates five concrete fundamentals of trust—concrete character qualities that inspire boldness:

1. That you will **give them the vision and the means to achieve it**—a vision they may not believe possible unless you walk the point and take the lead;
2. That **there are no sacrifices you won't make on their behalf to help them achieve the goals** and objectives you and your leaders have set for them;
3. That you **care less for your own well-being than for theirs**;
4. That you **take full responsibility for whatever mistakes and failures occur and that you accord then all the credit when victory is achieved**; and
5. That **when they fail** you, as people surely do, you will **deal with them personally and professionally**, remembering they are human beings, worthy of your respect even in failure.

If you do these things, you may find you have the reins of stallions that must be steered rather than motivated. *The need for boldness is never as apparent as when the risk is greatest; and at that time, the leader's survival depends upon trust he either previously created or neglected.*

### **BOLDNESS DOES NOT REQUIRE PERFECTION**

*In the military, second place isn't an option—second place is death and defeat. You've got to have bold people who risk failure to achieve victory where none thought it possible.*

**Zero-defect warriors aren't incompetent, but they are dangerous because they assume reaching zero defects for a defined period is the pinnacle of performance.** CEO of AT&T, insists, "I don't expect anyone to be perfect. It's not human nature. What I do expect is that they will take risks, correct mistakes and learn from both."

If you or your leaders are in the habit of conveying an attitude that says, "If I wanted your opinion, I'd ask for it," expect to get very little feedback.

**BOLDNESS REQUIRES WILLINGNESS TO RISK**  
**GREATLY BY BREAKING THE MOLD**

When I say “break the mold,” I’m not saying “break all the rules.” ***Boldness is much deeper and more difficult than just breaking rules. It’s knowing when and where to break the rules, and when and where to enforce them with an iron will.***

**FIND YOUR STONEWALLS!**

***At the heart of boldness are strength and commitment—both vertically and horizontally.***

If you can multiply boldness, you will multiply every other measurement of success.

Used in the right way, boldness becomes a multiplier of the forces and resources available to a leader. **At its best, boldness becomes a living energy within the heart of the organization that is no longer leader-driven, but is possessed and demonstrated by each individual with fire and perseverance.**

If you want any significant change in your organization, you are going to have to lead it with boldness, and then infuse it.

**CONCLUSION**

Lee had purposely put bold leaders into key positions, and Stonewall Jackson was his boldest.

Lee would later say of Jackson, “Such an executive officer the sun never shone on.

As for Lee, he was a man of honor. As he went to sign the terms of surrender, he described his journey as harder than dying “a thousand deaths.” Even so, he admonished his fellow Southerners to refuse the path of bitterness and “abandon all your animosities and make all your sons Americans.” He was bold enough to admonish reconciliation and peace.

**CHAPTER 9**

**GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT**  
**GENERAL OF THE ARMIES**  
**OF THE POTOMAC**

GRANT SURVEYED THE CONFEDERATE FORCES STRETCHING more than seven miles before him. The mules and dogs in the area were being eaten as quickly as they could be found.

**General Grant was both tenacious and patient as he unleashed a terrible fusillade of some six thousand mortar shots every twenty-four hours upon the rebel positions.** More than nine thousand Union casualties and ten thousand Confederate casualties filled the hills and valleys, hospitals, and makeshift medical camps within and without Vicksburg. The fusillade destroyed nearly every structure standing. After nearly forty days of battle, the South raised the white flag of surrender on July 4 1863.

The news of the victory at Vicksburg caused President Lincoln to take notice. There were too few messengers bringing good news from the front. Lincoln thought of Grant “**he makes things git! Wherever he is, things move.**”

Lincoln promoted Grant to general of the Union Armies. **Grant had established himself as a hero of the Union Army three and a half years into the Civil War**—a war costing the United States a million and a half dollars, four hundred men killed, and another four hundred wounded each day.

**Grant was a well-liked modest man.** Grant was a kind and considerate.

In addition to a highly motivated and superbly led opposing force, Grant faced a competition for resources to defend Washington. Lincoln held a well-grounded belief that a strong capital defense was paramount to Union survival. This defense, however, stripped previous field commanders of the very resources needed to take the offensive.

Following the bloodiest day of the war at Antietam, Lincoln relieved McClellan and replaced him with Burnside. Four months later, following another disappointment against the South's smaller numbers at Fredericksburg, Lincoln replaced Burnside with Hooker. Hooker lasted a year and a half until the Union Army was defeated while holding a three-to-one advantage at Chancellorsville. It was at this point that Lincoln pinned his hopes upon Grant.

**To stand up for the men who would face battle without adequate resources, Grant decided to confront his leadership. Believing that it was easier to ask for forgiveness than ask for permission, he boldly took action and faced the consequences.** This took place a month after assuming command.

**Grant faced a quandary all leaders face at some point: protect yourself and personal needs, take care of your people even at personal cost, or find a Solomon-like solution.**

**Unfortunately, Solomon-like resolutions aren't always possible, and a choice between yourself and your people is necessary.** Grant's answer was to subjugate his personal risk, confront his superiors, and stand up for the sake of the men who served him.

General Grant was in a very difficult position having to follow six failed Union generals.

During the terrible war of attrition with the South, he earned ample opportunity for his men to despise him for his losses. In a period of five weeks Grant fought three major battles losing fifty-five thousand men in the process.

In spite of this discouraging beginning his men rightly felt his care for their well-being. “He was far more frugal with human life than his leading Confederate counterpart . . . preferring to take prisoners than to slay foes.”

General Grant’s concern for the welfare of those around him extended even to those of his enemy. Even on the final day of the war, Grant demonstrated concern for the foot soldiers in the Southern army.

Grant’s humanity never compromised his ability to carry out his mission. Rather, it enhanced his standing in both the South and the North as a tough, honorable, and resourceful commander. There is great power in a moral leader who has time for even a wounded enemy.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY’S CENTURIONS

Many organizations and leaders today seem to believe they don’t owe anything to their people beyond a paycheck. They not only don’t stand up for their people; they stand up *against* their people.

There is no example like a bad example. “People” are a precious resource and must be treated with dignity and respect to be retained. Christ long ago counseled, “Among you, those who are the greatest should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant.”

The examples of leaders failing woefully in the area of “people care” are legion.

I have been privileged to observe senior leaders who know what it means to “take care of their own.” Changing an organizational culture, doesn’t happen overnight.

Taking care of your people is crucial to the success of any organization. Too many leaders, grateful for the opportunity to take over their new position; quickly seek the favor of their benefactors to the detriment of those they lead. Most of the time, it is not your boss but those who work for you who determine your success. If you take care of your people, *they* will accomplish the mission.

## A PAUSE FOR A SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Sometimes taking care of your people requires you to stand up to those above you.

*“When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.”* – Billy Graham

It is critical to let your superiors know where you stand and what your team must have in order to succeed. There is no better time to do this than on day one. Some leaders work in “ethically challenged” organizations and must define the line of integrity they refuse to cross. Others work in “management challenged” organizations and must stand up for their people each day to get the things they require.

### PATHWAYS OF A SERVANT LEADER

#### Considerations for aspiring Centurion servant leaders:

- Are you a ruler or a servant of those under your responsibility?
- When was the last time you asked about the personal needs of someone who works for you?
- When was the last time you met the needs of an employee beyond the workplace?
- Do you mentor employees or is it too time intensive.
- What kind of working climate have you established? Are people seen as a means to the end, or are they catalysts treated as valued resources?
- When you pass away, how will you be remembered? As one who cared about himself, or as one who cared about everyone else?

*In a period of war, General Grant sought to care for the needs of his men and even his enemies. How is it that so many are so lacking in such care and concern in peacetime leadership?* It is a lack of Centurion strength and honor? **In Grant, even his enemies knew and respected him, as his later election to the presidency demonstrated.**

Are our business, ministries, or careers so hurried and so important that we cannot take time along the way for the interruptions of those who depend upon us and maybe those who don't? *A wounded, confederate soldier never forgot the Union general who stooped to give him aid.*

**As the end of the war drew near, Grant received one of the most unusual displays of honor ever recorded.**

[As] Grant rode along his line he heard a Federal; picket sentinel [guard] call out, “Turn out the guard for the commanding general.”



Grant as usual replied, “Never mind the guard.” To his astonishment the Confederate sentinel, on the opposite bank of the creek, then shouted, “Turn out the guard for General Grant.” The entire Confederate picket line, instantly fell in, faced the Federal general and presented arms, General Grant returned the unexpected salute, and rode on.”

An honorable man is always respected, whatever the color of his uniform, the stripes on his sleeve, or the title on his business card.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **ABRAHAM LINCOLN** **BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE** **PEOPLE, *with* THE PEOPLE**

*Centurions have Contact Charisma. They know their people not just their functions.*

BIRMINGHAM, UK; January 21, 2001

George Turklebaum, 51, had a heart attack in the office he shared with 23 other workers. He quietly passed away on Monday, but nobody noticed until Saturday morning.

His boss, Elliot Warchiaski, said, “George was always absorbed in his work and kept much to himself.”

The story was retracted as an “urban legend”—a hoax. What is most telling is not that it was a hoax, but that many in the corporate world so readily believed it.

***You can accomplish a great deal if you're willing to mix your competence with sincerely enjoying being with your people.***

A Centurion must find the way to achieve Contact Charisma with many entities to survive the difficult periods each organization inevitable faces.

Lincoln's leadership style is the gold standard in "Contact Charisma." **Contact Charisma is a connection between a leader and another that leaves the other ready to follow the leader no matter what the cost.** It is developed by leaders who genuinely care about their employees and spend time finding out about the conditions and challenges their people face. Lincoln was looking to connect with you so he could understand your point of view, and you his.

## BEGINNINGS—ENCOURAGEMENT FOR LEADERS WITHOUT LOOKS AND MEANS

Lincoln was a man known for his humble nature.

Most of his life, including those years in the White House Lincoln gave little thought to his appearance. It was said that his shoes never knew black polish and his clothes never saw a whisk broom.

More than most, Lincoln wanted to live up to the trust that others had placed in him.

Lincoln often laughed at his own looks with a story claiming that a stranger came up to him one day and handed him a pocket-knife. "I was astonished and told the stranger that the knife was not mine. But the stranger told me, 'This knife was placed in my hands some years ago, with the injunction that I was to keep it until I found a man uglier than myself. I have carried it from that time to this. Allow me now to say, sir that I think you are fairly entitled to the property.'"

Lincoln had a legendary ability of using stories to make his most important points.

What Lincoln said would be remembered. His were the ideas and illustrations that would not be forgotten. Men often called upon him for the pleasure of listening to him."

"Lincoln always manifested interest in everybody with whom he associated . . . He struck you as the sort of man who would go out of his way to serve you.

They underestimated him to their own ruin. One of his courtroom opponents, Leonard Swett, stated:

"He was as wise as a serpent in the trial of a cause, but I have had too many scars from his blows to certify that he was harmless as a dove.

**His ability to see his opponents' point of view became part of his charisma.** Even though the disagreement remained, they knew he had considered their request or opinion fairly

**while persuasively presenting his own.** He was apt at putting aside personal feelings about an individual, opponent, or enemy, which lent added weight to appeal.

### **INTO POLITICS—CHARISMA OF *A COMMON MAN WITH UNCOMMON CHARACTER***

When the political powers look for a candidate to back, they are looking for a winner: someone with ability, background, charisma, and track record (and today, money). *If you were looking at the resumes of the presidential candidates in 1859, Lincoln's would seem more suited for the outhouse rather than the White House.*

- 1832—Lost his job and was defeated for state legislature.
- 1833—Failed in business.
- 1835—Sweetheart died.
- 1836—Had a nervous breakdown.
- 1838—Defeated for speaker of the Illinois House.
- 1843—Defeated for nomination to Congress.
- 1848—Lost nomination to Congress.
- 1849—Rejected for post of land officer.
- 1854—Defeated for U.S. Senate.
- 1856—Defeated for nomination for vice president.
- 1858—Defeated for U.S. Senate.

“It was Abe Lincoln’s rival, the little Giant from Illinois, the smooth, self-assured Stephen A. Douglas who was the resplendent figure in the Lincoln-Douglas debates.” “Two men presenting wider contrasts could hardly be found.

**Lincoln lost the election to Douglas but was remembered, though not loved, for his frank assessment that “a house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free,”** *Though it proved prophetic, it was badly received. “[It was] not a welcome message to bring as the house caves in on its occupants, who to the last want to believe that this, too will blow over, and all will be as it was before—that another shoddy compromise with a moral evil will hold it all together.”*

**So what was it about Lincoln that caused the nation to turn to him in 1860.**

“Electioneering in the nineteenth century was as much a social time as it was a political affair. Party leaders organized huge parades, rallies, barbecues, and other community-wide festivities. These campaign events were very participatory, including the stump speeches. Such combined political and social gatherings were especially welcomed in the countryside as a break from the isolation of farm life.”

This was where Lincoln was at his best. His charisma was communicated person-to-person and in small group interactions winning many through his wit as well as his wisdom.

Douglas was caught on the horns of a dilemma. He couldn't argue for Federal sovereignty without alienating his Southern supporters, and he couldn't come out strong for states' rights and slavery without alienating the North. Lincoln made his position well known. He stood firm whatever the consequences. During the presidential debates, Lincoln used this dilemma against Douglas by continuing to ask him questions that he couldn't answer without alienating his **Lincoln made his points with metaphors the voters remembered.** What kills the skunk is the publicity it gives itself. What a skunk wants to do is keep snug under the barn in the daytime, when men are around with shotguns.

**He won the elections garnering only 40 percent of the popular vote but the majority in the Electoral College. Before he took the oath of office, the South, state by state, began to secede.**

#### **ABE IN "THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE"**

Lincoln's own well-turned phrase, "You may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all the people all the time."

With a rival government set up in power, troops being called to duty on each side, and radical politics fanning the flames of war, he faced the worst emergency since the nation's founding. *It is in the fire that the true character of a human being is revealed.*

*"Lincoln receives his people, the White House doors stand open to every American: like a church, it is everybody's house.*

No man but Mr. Lincoln ever knew how great was the load of care which he bore, nor the amount of mental labor which he daily accomplished.

Lincoln never lost his openness to the public even up to the day of his death. To him the White House was the people's house.

#### **FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE ISN'T EASY TO GET, BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO BEAT**

*Contact Charisma ignites a flame when leaders care enough to leave their office to breathe the air their subordinates must endure.* A concept is just a concept, difficult to imagine until you see it demonstrated by an apt model.

For Lincoln, wandering was a way of life, having spent much of his life stumping for office, or traveling the circuit as a young attorney. Getting firsthand information provided the margin between winning and losing his case in court. He sought the same as president.

Lincoln replaced General Fremont chiefly for being so out of touch. His cardinal mistake is that he isolates himself.

**Lincoln's presence at the office of Secretary of War Stanton was legendary. He was a frequent resident of the telegraph office inside the Department of War waiting for news of the latest battle.** Once in a while he spent the night in the telegraph office waiting for dispatches from the field.

In the first year in the White House, Lincoln averaged thirteen to fifteen days a month out of the office. **He would often show up unannounced at his senior generals' camp to get a firsthand account. When the Civil War ended, President Lincoln was still in the field and . . . was one of the last people in Washington to hear of Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox.**

**Lincoln wanted his senior leaders to know what was expected of them.** Lincoln often illustrated his most important directions with a relevant story.

**Lincoln's leadership quality of leaving his memory and his stories implanted in the people he met is quintessential Contact Charisma.** He focused upon his need to know what was going on in the field and find out the quality of his commanders. For him, there was no substitute for seeing things with his own eyes. For those who served under him, seeing the president out and about the Union camps was a great moral booster. **Establishing Contact Charisma requires both—you need to know what is going on, and your people need to know that you care enough to get firsthand information from them.** Lincoln was one of the few Centurions who did this with aplomb.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY'S CENTURIONS

A RECENT STUDY in the 2003 *Workplace Reality* survey revealed 95 percent of CEOs believe their managers are happy, while only 56 percent actually are. Only 19 percent of managers felt their bosses communicated effectively, while 21 percent said the boss was hopeless at communication.

**Lincoln's example, he spent about 75 percent of his time meeting with people.** "Lincoln saying, "It is important that the people know I come among them without fear."

The lesson here is managers should find ways—appropriate to them—to keep in touch with their people.

**“But I can’t find the time—I don’t have the resources-I have too much paperwork--I have others who are supposed to take care of that—I have to keep my boss happy” are excuses used by managers uncomfortable developing Contact Charisma.**

To be successful you have to feel the texture, walk in the trenches, or breathe the air of the environment where your people will make or break your business. That means extending your comfort zone from the controlled environment you call your office. **When you get out and smell the air where your people are living and sometimes dying, you get an inimitable assessment far superior to any report the best briefer can provide. There is no substitute for “being there”—a person of the people, by the people, and with the people.**

### PAUSE FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

**There just couldn’t be a better example of “being there” than Jesus Christ.**

Jesus went to where His future disciples were living and working. Like Lincoln, He used stories to illustrate the kind of work He was calling them to perform. He led by personal example for nearly three years through daily contact with His followers. He had no office, but He made every meeting with others an opportunity to communicate His message through the wisdom of His words and deeds. His words and charisma were so powerful that many remembered His teachings word for word years after.

His words burned into the hearts of those who heard. **He was the antithesis of most leaders, and so we find His example somewhat disconcerting and uncomfortable.**

**Jesus didn’t aim to please everyone, and He obviously made enemies along the way. Every life of integrity will create controversy because it makes people uncomfortable.** Are people uncomfortable around you, perhaps even so angered by you that they border on the irrational? When people are moved out of their comfort zones, we can expect resistance and even strong emotions. **Yet these reactions didn’t keep Jesus from going where He was needed—even when He knew the reaction would be unpleasant. He wasn’t afraid to confront those who claimed to be part of His organization and went right into their workspaces to do it.**

**His method of training twelve key individuals, while not neglecting the majority of His other followers, serves as a powerful example to integrate into our method of communicating guidance and vision to our organizations today.**

## PATHWAYS TO CONTACT CHARISMA LEADERSHIP

**Charisma is an elusive and nearly indefinable concept, and yet it is an irresistible kind of magnetism that draws people to you.**

People with charisma have a strong sense of who they are—of their self-worth. That doesn't mean they are self-centered egomaniacs, they are willing to be more transparent than most of their peers. Others, though technically brilliant, have but a small capacity to connect with their people.

***This kind of charisma isn't "spun" or "marketed" or "staged as a publicity event."***

**You need to pursue it with all your heart.**

“Leadership is not so much about technique and methods as it is about opening the heart. Leadership is about inspiration—of oneself and of others. Great leadership is about human experiences, not processes.”

- Lance Secretan

Are you willing to be that interested in the people who will make or break you? Or are they really just nothing more than tools, cogs, or stepping-stones on your road to success? Are you willing to invest yourself and your time in them? If they really matter, they will sense that and will follow you into the deepest valley and climb the tallest mountain to achieve the goals you have jointly set.

### **HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO START YOU ON THE PATH**

1. Schedule time out of your office every day—at least one hour. Find one lower-level worker visit him in his workspace. Find out about what kinds of challenges he is facing. Then find a lower-level supervisor and do the same. Work your way along until you've met and spent time with every member of your organization.
2. Great reports from the source whenever possible. You'll be surprised by how much clarity you'll gain when you speak face-to-face.
3. Invite people to question your ideas and directions during the formulation stage. If you can't respond with clear and convincing answers, then take a step back and rethink your position. *An idea that can't stand the light of an argument is not one that should see the light of day.*

4. **Take the long view.** *It is a cornerstone of building Centurion leadership.* You're not going to impress your bosses immediately with this strategy. What you are going to do is develop incredible loyalty and work ethic among your team or organization that ultimately will impress not just your bosses but theirs as well.
5. Be patient with yourself. It's going to take time, effort, and practice. Watch others who possess this and learn from them. Never stop watching and learning from those who are more successful at this than you are. *It's not a weakness to admit your limitations; it is a weakness not to improve them.*

## CHAPTER 11

### THE ROMAN CENTURION NO DEADLIER OCCUPATION, NO WARMER HEART

*More accountability is the foundation, either solid  
or crumbling, upon which our legacies stand.*

THERE WAS ONCE A GREAT ROMAN CENTURION. Of the tens of thousands who went off to war, barely a third would return. But this Centurion had survived.

Looking around at his family, he rejoiced to see each of them. And for this Centurion, his servants held a special place in his heart large enough to love even the lowest born. The Centurion had seen it many times before – death was in the room.

This man wasn't just a boss, he was a Centurion, and that meant something. He was powerful and strong, yet he was important in the face of death. Yet he had heard the strange stories of someone who healed the sick and even raised the dead. *Jesus was a man that death feared rather than the other way around.* If he were called a coward for seeking out a Jewish teacher for help, then so be it if this Jesus could save His beloved servant.

He had traveled a thousand miles to kill for Rome; what was a dozen miles more to try to save a man as dear as his own son? So he went to see Jesus. *He went because he cared about all who served and counted upon him. He cared because he was a Centurion.*

*Reckoning comes without warning...*



The centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel . . .”

And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment. (Matt. 8:5-13)

We’ve come to the heart of it. The foundation of all principles lies here.

**Eisenhower counseled:**

***“If we give up our principles for our privileges,  
we will ultimately lose both.”***

Virtue is seen as a commodity that can be bought and sold like shares of common stock. Our schools teach our children there are no absolute values.

So how do we rebuild the crumbling foundations that can no longer support a stable or thriving society? **It’s only possible when each person begins to see himself as part of a future solution instead of a victim of a past beyond his control**

## THE ROMAN CENTURION

Here is the job description of the Centurion if you’re up for it... **One of the great secrets of becoming a great leader—never stop becoming.**

**A Centurion was battle hardened—a veteran of numerous campaigns where he distinguished himself with valor.**

There were no political appointments, or under-the-table payoffs. You either are or aren’t a veteran. It can’t be a gift, and it can’t be passed down from one generation to the next; it has to be earned by each person.

*A Centurion could carry ninety pounds of equipment at least twenty miles per day and train under the harshest of conditions. The Centurion provided his own equipment, armor, and paid*

*for even the tools he needed to fight the battle. He was a skilled engineer and builder in addition to being the finest combat soldier.*

*A Centurion was the ultimate in professional competence.* There were no allowances made for persons of his position or stature.

It was a matter of honor and pride that he carry his own implements into battle. *Centurions expected little or nothing from the state.* He was a skilled engineer who could build a bridge.

*The enlistment period was for twenty-five years, after which a cash payment and small plot of land were provided.*

*A Centurion understood he gave the best years of his life to Rome.* He was a leader who had a calling upon his life that might very well cost him his life. **At the end of his days, he understood that his reward was not in the pittance of land or few coins the treasury would dole out, but the knowledge and legacy he left to those who followed behind him.** *It was enough to know he served with courage, honor, and faithful service in the fires of battle.*

*He understood one principle that many today have forgotten: No one could take his honor from him.*

*To rise to Centurion was considered the highest honor a legionnaire could attain.*

## *The Centurion always led his troops from the front.*

We do not see this kind of attitude of service in leadership often enough today. *The highest honor he sought—to lead from the front and to encourage his legionnaires by his courageous action.* The survival statistics for Centurions were not promising, and each paid into a burial fund to cover the costs of his interment.

In spite of all of these hardships, there were numerous examples of great valor. **One such Centurion, Spurius Ligustinus, was promoted to the rank of Centurion Prion (senior Centurion of the Legion) in 200 BC. By the time he was fifty years old, he had served twenty-two years and had been singled out for bravery thirty-four times and received six civic crowns.** It was his civic work in Rome as well as his bravery on the field of battle that garnered him recognition.

*The Centurion held ultimate sway over the welfare of every man who served in his one-hundred-man century.*

Punishment was swift when legionnaires fell short and the Centurion was called upon to inflict a punishment that we would consider barbaric today. It was a difficult duty because he knew each

of these men personally; most had served with him side by side in many battles. Still, he had to carry out the orders to maintain unit *esprit de corps* and strength in the entire army.

But there was a side of the Centurion that is common among leaders who leave a legacy. Most are quiet about their personal feelings for their subordinates, yet those who understand their responsibilities. Reach out to walk an extra mile for their troops. The Centurion in the New Testament was one such leader.

## THE ROMAN CENTURION AND JESUS

Look in for a moment upon this scene. Consider the cost that the Roman Centurion must have weighed carefully before coming to One in danger of arrest at any time.

The Centurion put on his uniform and set out to find this teacher, this preacher, this strange man that he heard could do things no one else had ever done. **He came understanding he might be arrested for what today would be called “conduct unbecoming an officer.” He also was willing to risk the hostility of zealots. In spite of all of this, he came.**

Do you have any idea of what it must have cost that Centurion once the news spread that he had demeaned himself and his position beneath that of an itinerant teacher for the sake of a slave? His previous reputation and all of his mighty deeds would have been for naught at the very least.

When I decided to retire from the military, **Did I have any regrets? Yes, I had regrets, but more important, I had no doubts. I knew I was following the path of my destiny and was willing to pay whatever price was necessary to be true to my calling, true to myself, and true to the One who had called me.**

**Those called to be leaders—those who want to be Centurions--carry a heavy mantle of responsibility. In the movie *Gladiator*, Russell Crowe tells his men before battle, “What we do here echoes in eternity.” What powerful thought; What we do really matters. What we fail to do also matters. What you do echoes in eternity. You are the author of the book titled You—a book that will one day be read in eternity.**

For a small period of time you have been given a small measure of “power.” Yet *all* power is vested in and comes from the Almighty. **If He has entrusted some of this to you, it comes with the gravest responsibility for which you will one day be held accountable. Are you ready to do your duty no matter the response from others?**

**I am reminded of the meeting between the dead Jacob Marley and Scrooge on Christmas Eve in the Dickens classic, *A Christmas Carol*. When Scrooge complimented Jacob on the business savvy he exercised during his lifetime, Jacob cried out in despair.**

**‘Business!’ he said, wringing his hands. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business.**

I think there is more truth in those few words than a thousand sermons I’ve heard. **With greater power comes greater responsibility and accountability.**

This Centurion was not too hardened, too concerned for his own future, or too covetous of maintaining an unblemished reputation to act on something of greater value.

He didn’t wait for the teacher to wander away from the crowds. He didn’t send a dozen soldiers to “escort” Jesus to his residence so that he could meet Him in private and protect his reputation. In full view of all in the marketplace, he made his request, and then he said words that no Roman, much less a Roman officer, would say. **He told Jesus, “I am not worthy.” This soldier had not only a Centurion’s title; he had a Centurion’s heart.**

#### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY’S CENTURIONS

**Power and all of the illusions that accompany it are a mist that disappears at sunrise.** On my final tour of duty in the Pentagon I gathered my twenty-five man office around me on my first day, looked at each of them, and said:

**“This office is going to develop the next generation of aircraft—ones that fly without pilots. I believe in you. I believe you were hired because you were the best and brightest, and I am confident that you will do all that is required to meet the challenges that we now face and those that will soon confront us. What I want to do is to assist you in accomplishing the great tasks before us. I have no desire to make this job a stepping-stone to something greater. I am content that I am here for a purpose that needs no further elevation. I am not here to make a name for myself or get promoted. And when the time comes for me to go, my measure of success will be this; ‘Did I make this a good place to work? Did I create an environment where every person in this office got up each morning and felt like this was the best job he ever had? If I do that, I know you will accomplish our mission. If I do that, whatever else happens, I will consider myself a success.’”**

The Centurion who visited Jesus had something more important on his mind and risked personal punishment when he made the journey to meet this teacher. He had a heart-felt moral responsibility to do everything in his power to help his dying servant. There was some deep sense of honor and concern for all he was responsible for that drove him to see Jesus and humble himself for the sake of a mere slave.

**“Expedients are for the hour but principles are for the ages.”**

- Henry Ward Beecher, 1887

*You are not the victim of circumstances. As noted earlier, “Randomness rules less in those who steer.”*

*Most lead for self-serving reasons, a few—so very few—  
follow the path of the Centurion.*

*You may never hear a word of thanks,  
but the strength, honor, and wisdom of Centurions  
across the ages will echo in your soul.*

Though you will one day die along with all other mortals, a people yet born will one day rise up and say—“Yes, but look how he lived.”

## EPILOGUE

Never, ever, focus upon the size of the problem. It is always going to be too large. Focus instead upon the strength of your resources; look at what you *are* able to do, and start there. Then keep putting one foot in front of the other, you will be given what you need at the time you need it.

I learned that I had to believe in it before anyone else would. There are doors that open in time when the Master of your destiny calls. Go through those doors while they are open if you delay they will close.

**We began to pray, and after nine months, we felt God’s release to “share” our work with others. Share—not persuade. Persuasion we would leave to the Destiny Maker. And share we did, and soon received official status from the IRS as a tax-exempt organization: Mission of Joy.**

Today, we house more than two hundred orphans full-time from the day they arrive until they are grown and start their own lives as Christian believers. We take care of their food, clothing, education, medical care, and Christian education. We also have brought the gospel to hundreds of villages and have opened more than fifty churches with Indian pastors whose heart is to reach their own people. We run a home for Christian widows, conduct medical care for the poor, provide, AIDS and leprosy education, and are digging wells in villages without water at the rate of one a month. We feed a thousand meals a week to hungry children and in the past fifteen years have seen more than one hundred thousand seekers find Christ to be the answer to their emptiness.

I invite you to examine the possibility of giving up your life as a boss or a manager and seek the Centurion's path. I wish you Godspeed on your most unpredictable and fulfilling journey toward becoming what every leader should strive to be—a Centurion for the ages.

---Colonel Jeff O'Leary (Ret.)