

Rise to Heroism

Past heroes can help you.



by Michael Class

DO YOU RECALL HOW YOU felt when Apollo 11 landed on the moon—or when President Ronald Reagan stood at the Brandenburg Gate and demanded, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

These events are more than just history to you—they are part of your life experience. And you can call upon this lesson. For example, when you’re about to take on a major challenge, recall Neil Armstrong’s words: “That’s one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.”

Imagine the challenges your children will face, and ask: What lessons of history will prepare them for their future? How can you teach those lessons?

I was appalled at how some teachers presented American history to my children. My son and daughter learned that Thomas Jefferson had slaves before they learned that he wrote the document articulating our rights and duties as free people. They learned that European settlers killed Native Americans—an allegation that upstaged the stories of courage, perseverance, and faith. My children knew that 100,000 people died when the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, but they didn’t understand the moral context and the scale of World War II.

With a curriculum designed to instill guilt and shame, I wonder, how our kids will ever discover the lessons of history that inspire greatness and noble aspirations? Will they ever believe that they can make a difference? Will they have any heroes left at all? Then, I wondered: What would the heroes of America’s past say to the children of today?

These questions serve as the impetus for my business, Magic Picture Frame Studio. I intend to transform the way children learn history—and the lessons from it. Our first release is a book, *Anthony and the Magic Picture Frame*, in which a boy time-travels into the great events of the 20th century—in the cockpit of the *Spirit of St. Louis* with Charles Lindbergh, on the moon with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, in the labs of Thomas Edison and Jonas Salk, and on Normandy beach on D-Day.

The heroes of the past have something important to tell us: The purpose of life is to live a life of purpose. One

person can make a difference. Doing the right thing always matters.

I began to wonder how we could model our lives after these heroes. What enabled them to put their beliefs into action? What made them great?

Five Life Lessons

Here are the main insights, phrased as five resolutions:

1. Explore—find out what life has to offer. Michael Collins, Apollo 11 astronaut, said: “Go places and do things that haven’t been done before.”

2. Follow your plan—one step at a time. Charles Lindbergh, pilot of the *Spirit of St. Louis*, said: “The important thing is to start; to lay a plan, and then follow it step by step.”

3. See opportunity—and take

SERVICE • SACRIFICE

Sacrifice in Service

It’s a personal leadership trait.



by John Ripley

OUR CURRENT VIEW OF service leadership is dominated by the excesses of corporate executives. We tend to distrust leaders who operate in exclusion at the top with obscene compensation, unjustified perks, and royal privileges.

Hence, we tend to discount the fact that most people at the top have invested 20 to 35 years working inside. They didn’t just arrive there one day unannounced. Of course, there are exceptions, but most people earn their way up through education and experience—at great expense. With few exceptions, meritocracy still rules.

One common trait of great leaders—sacrifice—stops many who seek instant gratification and short-cuts to wealth and status. So rarely is this trait discussed that of all the leadership texts in use in business schools, I find very little mention of it. In fact, sacrifice has become a pejorative term—no longer seen as useful or even relevant. Our emerging leaders, drawn from a generation focused on rapid rewards, have purged the term from the lexicon. Their model is the mega-rich entrepreneur, glamorous star, corporate chief, or entitled government head. These models



advantage of it. Thomas Edison, inventor, said: “Opportunity is missed by most people, because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

4. Work hard and create your own good luck. Lou Gehrig, baseball player, said: “My success came from one word—hustle.”

5. Live—and give—with passion. Dr. Jonas Salk said: “Do what makes your heart leap.”

Take time to reflect on the past and remember our history and heroes. Help children to hear the voices of great men and women of the past calling them to greatness. PE

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ACTION: Learn from past heroes.

certainly exist, but in most cases, people still sacrifice and serve and pay their dues. In the military, people are placed in life-threatening circumstances that require personal hardship and long tours of duty away from family. Military leaders accept such sacrifice as a condition of their service.

In today’s world, all of us engage in moderate sacrifice—of both a personal and professional nature—often without realizing it. In any enterprise that expects to be competitive and sustainable, work often makes great demands on us. Risk and stress place great psychological, emotional, and physical demands on us and our family members.

Your work becomes sacrifice when you put aside personal gain for the benefit of the organization. When you put personal gain behind those things that would benefit team members, you clearly offer a sacrifice.

The best leaders tend to be caring individuals who serve and sacrifice.

In a real way, morale invariably increases from inspired and selfless leadership.

Sacrifice can take different forms. Some people can absorb more than others. Still, sacrifice is a core trait of every great leader. You need not suffer to sacrifice, but others must sense that you are willing to deal with hardship, absorb the slings and arrows of critics for the good of the unit, and accept your personal burdens in a way that has minimal impact on others. PE

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ACTION: What sacrifice are you making?