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OF PEOPLE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Your Leadership Legacy

The Difference You Make
in People's Lives

Marta Brooks
Julie Stark
Sarah Caverhill

FOREWORD BY KEN BLANCHARD

An Excerpt From

***Your Leadership Legacy:
The Difference You Make in People's Lives***

by Marta Brooks, Julie Stark, & Sarah Caverhill
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FOREWORD

In my life, I have always been concerned about the awesome responsibility I feel to the people who work in our company and the clients we have, as well as my friends and family. I hope and pray that I have made or will make a positive difference in their lives.

I ask people all the time if they would like to leave the world a better place for their having been here. Everyone smiles and says, "Sure I would." Then I ask them, "What is your plan to do that?" Nine out of ten people laugh because they obviously don't have a plan. Yet we *all* can make the world a better place by the moment-to-moment decisions we make as we interact with others.

I believe that every passing moment in our lives is just another opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Whether we are sitting beside someone in an airplane, stepping onto an elevator with a stranger, or sitting in a company meeting, these are the very moments when we can give the gift of ourselves.

There is nothing fancy here. Regardless of our status, achievement, or position, our impact lies squarely on how we spend these moments—what we say and how we say

it when we are with people and how they feel when we are gone. This is our “leadership legacy.”

When I first read *Your Leadership Legacy*, I realized that whether we try or not, we will all have a leadership legacy. The question is, what kind of legacy will it be?

I think Marta Brooks, Julie Stark, and Sarah Caverhill have nailed it in describing the key ingredients that go into a positive leadership legacy. It starts with understanding that it’s not about your position; it’s who you are as a person that leaves a positive leadership legacy. My father was my teacher here. When I was in the seventh grade, I was elected president of my class. I came home all excited about sharing the good news with my parents. After congratulating me, my father said, “Ken, now that you are president and have a position, never use it. Great leaders are not effective because of the position they hold but because they are trusted and respected by others.”

That leads to the second key ingredient—focusing on the people you are attempting to influence. After all, they are the key to getting anything done. That means you have to connect with them. My mother used to tell me, “Don’t act like you are better than anyone else. But don’t let anyone else act like they are better than you.”

The final ingredient is driving your dream. My wife, Margie, always says, “A goal is a dream with a deadline.” Leadership is about going somewhere. If you don’t know where you are going, your leadership doesn’t matter. A clear vision and direction gets people into the act of forgetting about themselves.

I am thrilled to have Marta, Julie, and Sarah and their book, *Your Leadership Legacy*, as part of the Ken Blanchard

series at Berrett-Koehler. I have known Marta and Sarah for a long time. They have been two of our most outstanding consulting partners, spreading the good word about leading at a higher level to companies and organizations all over the country. Recently, Sarah became a sales leader and is already making an impact there. By joining up with their colleague Julie Stark, they have created a very special book with an important message.

If you care about what your leadership legacy looks like and want to shape it into an inspirational gift to others, you'll read this book.

The legacy you live is the legacy you leave.

KEN BLANCHARD

Coauthor of *The One Minute Manager*[®]

PREFACE

This book was born out of one simple question: What makes a person unforgettable? As management training and leadership professionals, as neighbors, parents, and friends, we spent five years talking one-on-one with hundreds of men and women. In conversations with leaders of companies included in *Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For* and in chance meetings on the corner, we asked, "Who left an indelible impression on you at work or in your personal life?" "Whose shoes would you walk in today if you could?" And most important, "Why?"

Our respondents were as varied as the walks of life you can imagine. The "why," however, was remarkably consistent. The people they described all had one thing in common. They all had personal and compelling character.

Our journey began in finding out what these memorable people were *doing* to make their impact timeless. And here's what we discovered. Regardless of their age, gender, or vocation, these people positively influenced change in the lives of those around them. They were engaged in a most unique and personal act of leadership.

What, then, is a leadership legacy? Your leadership legacy is the sum total of the difference you make in

people's lives, directly and indirectly, formally and informally. The way you behave in your day-to-day life defines your legacy. The challenge is how to live in a way that creates a legacy others want to be a part of, too.

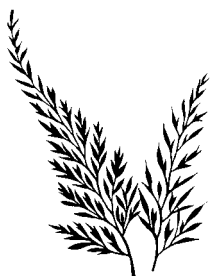
A great legacy doesn't just happen. Your legacy is built moment by moment, in small interactions. How you live your legacy can uplift people's spirits and inspire them to live or perform better than they thought possible. Or it can drag them down and create the opposite effect.

You will learn along with Doug, the main character, to adopt specific behaviors to change your legacy into one you are proud to leave. Through the modeling of some surprising mentors, you will witness courageous leaders who **Dare to Be a Person, Not a Position; Dare to Connect with People; and Dare to Drive the Dream.**

You may never know the full impact of your willingness to dare, but someone, and quite possibly *many someones*, will! Learn about the difference you make in people's lives. Dare to transform *Your Leadership Legacy*.

MARTA BROOKS
JULIE STARK
SARAH CAVERHILL
January 2004

THE READING OF THE WILL



Doug Roman was not in the mood for stop-and-go traffic.

"Obnoxious music," he snapped as he poked one of the buttons on the dash panel. The perfectly balanced sound of his custom audio system immediately replaced the cackling broadcast.

"Calm down, Doug," he told himself. "You've got plenty of time."

The reading of Nan's will was set for ten o'clock; by noon he would be the new CEO of Mooseland Stoneware. His aunt Nan had been more than an intelligent woman and the influential founder and CEO of Mooseland, the most prestigious stoneware company in the world. She had also been the single most important person in his life.

Doug glanced at his reflection in the rearview mirror.

"You've grown up to be a very handsome man," she'd told him often. "But that isn't why I love you."

Nan had taken full responsibility for him from the moment her doorbell had rung that rainy night those thirty-some years ago. The officer standing on her porch had explained how two young lives had been extinguished on a winding country road, the tragic result of the driver swerving to avoid a deer. In the midst of shock and grief, Nan had experienced a wave of relief, knowing that her younger brother's two-year-old son was sleeping safely in the guest room upstairs.

He had depended on her for everything. She was the one person in the world whom he had most loved and admired. And now she was gone. He knew that the reading of her will would mean that it was final.

Nan, why did you have to leave me?

He was late when he burst into the plush law offices of McCann & Pherson.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Roman," Tommy McCann's secretary said cheerfully as Doug breezed by her and pushed open the door to Tommy's inner office. He took a seat in the corner of the room so he could observe his relatives and the three board members who had gathered for the reading of the will.

Without addressing Doug directly, Tommy glanced over his half-glasses and cleared his throat. "I believe we are all present now. We are here to read the last will and testament of Nannette Mae Roman, executed . . ."

Nan had updated her will less than three months ago. Had she had a premonition that she was going to die? Why hadn't she said anything to me?

Tommy read name after name followed by the gifts that Nan had painstakingly selected for each one. It was clear that Nan had been generous, too generous in Doug's

estimation, with his cousins and their families. She had also designated impressive gifts for some of her employees, friends, and favorite charities.

When is Tommy going to get to my name?

"I'm going to ask everyone but Doug and the board members to leave the room now." He waited while Doug's relatives filed out of the room, not one of them giving Doug any more than a side-glance.

When the door finally closed, Doug leaned forward in his chair. "All right, what's going on?"

Tommy handed Doug a shallow rectangular box. "Your aunt asked me to give this to you."

Inside the box was a bonded-leather book. There was no title, just the raised design of a fern in the upper right corner of the cover. Doug lifted the book out of the box. A letter was folded inside the book and the inside front cover contained an inscription in Nan's familiar handwriting:

Dearest Doug,

As your journey reveals the truth, write it. As the truth reveals your legacy, live it.

Love,

Nan

Doug felt a distinct tightness in his chest. Without looking up, he unfolded the letter.

My dearest Doug,

As I write this, I can't help but think how much I love you. I am so proud of the wonderful man you have become. All my remaining personal belongings shall be yours to do with as you wish. In addition, I bequeath to you all assets not otherwise cited in my will. Tommy will handle the necessary details.

Mooseland Stoneware, my most precious gift, is, of course, rightfully yours. You shall be the CEO and chairman six months from today with one stipulation—the board must vote unanimously that you have discovered the personal imperatives that will prepare you to live your leadership legacy. Doug, you and Mooseland mean so much to me. Though I suspect you are stunned by this letter, I could never want anything less than what is best for you and the company.

Therefore, it is my decision that you shall embark on a journey, one that will reveal unexplored gifts that you might not know you have. Be assured, my darling Doug, that wherever you find new truths about your legacy, I am cheering your discovery.

Every journey begins with one step. This card will help you get started.

May God bless you on your journey.

Love,

Nan

A business card with a picture of a fern embossed in the upper right corner and the name and address of a local garden center was clipped to the bottom of the page.

Doug looked up at Tommy. "Did you know about this?"

"Yes, I did. Nan and I were colleagues and friends for many years. She and I discussed her plans at length, though I must say this is happening much sooner than she thought it would. The board members have received copies of this letter and another letter of instruction from your aunt. The second letter explains their responsibility to render a decision six months from today regarding your competence to serve as Mooseland's leader."

What was Nan talking about? Am I destined to be forever burdened with her ideas about leadership? Any doubts as to my achievements and suitability to lead Mooseland could be dispelled with a glance at my resume. And what am I supposed to do with this business card?

"This has to be some kind of mistake. What is my leadership legacy?"

"No, Doug, there's no mistake."

Doug stared at Tommy, waiting for an explanation.

"Building a leadership legacy differs from building a resume. A person's resume may include pages of experience and accomplishments. But none of that reflects that person's suitability to serve as a leader.

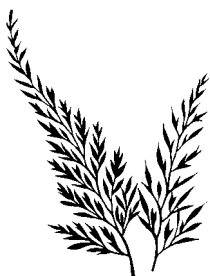
"Nan believed that the legacy you live is the legacy you leave. Do you have any sense of *your* leadership legacy? She was saying that if you're going to take the top leadership position of Mooseland, you must discover what it takes to live your leadership legacy. She knew what she was talking about. Trust her."

Doug looked down at the letter and then up at Tommy. "This is nuts. All of you are completely out of your minds!"

With that, he got up and left.

After Doug's abrupt departure, Tommy again addressed the board. "It is important that you understand the task Nan has set before you. Nan's dream is that Doug will master three crucial imperatives of effective leadership and begin to live his leadership legacy. Within six months, you must be convinced that he is willing to Dare to Be a Person, Not a Position; Dare to Connect with People; and Dare to Drive the Dream."

EVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH ONE STEP



Driving away from Tommy's office was a blur for Doug. *What just happened? Why would Nan, whom I trusted and loved more than anyone else, do this to me? How am I supposed to discover my leadership legacy?*

"I'll quit, that's what I'll do. I love Mooseland but I don't have to work there." Even as he said these words, he knew they were hollow. He cared about Mooseland and he wanted to do right by Nan, but what was she asking him to do?

As Doug zoomed past the manicured streetscape, his thoughts softened a bit as he remembered happier days. "My, aren't you full of yourself," Nan had teased, "but I love you just the same." On other occasions, he would carry on about a mistake *this* person had made or a crazy idea that *that* person had proposed, and she would simply give him a loving pat on the cheek. In more serious moments, like the one a few weeks earlier, she had responded

to one of his tirades with a tone that still disarmed him. "I love you," she had said softly, "not only for the person you are but for the person I know you'll become."

Returning to the present, he glanced at the empty journal flung carelessly on the seat beside him. His thoughts returned to the letter and the journey that Nan had planned for him. "Nan," he said aloud, "my leadership legacy? What is this all about?"

Truth Seekers Garden Center

Doug liked to solve problems with immediate action. If this was what Nan wanted, then so be it. It was Friday. He could handle a few items at the office, pick up his dry cleaning, and check out the garden center on the way home.

The sun was beginning to set as he approached the garden center. He found it easily and stopped safely away from other parked vehicles. Doug was not about to subject his car's flawless exterior to the assault of carelessly opened doors and recklessly piloted shopping carts.

The Truth Seekers Garden Center was busy as veteran landscapers and novice gardeners filled baskets and carts, intent on beautifying some corner of the world. Rows of perennials, annuals, and hanging baskets ready for adoption boasted all the rainbow's colors.

As Doug walked through the outside displays, pungent scents of soil, cedar mulch, and blooms engulfed him. He turned and looked at the panorama surrounding the garden center. There was a magnificence here that he had not noticed when he first pulled into the parking lot. Nan had loved the beauty of this part of the country and had

often said that once she'd seen it, she knew she had found her new home. Perhaps it was this very view that had welcomed her so many years ago. Realizing he had heard Nan tell her stories for the last time, Doug's mood melted into sadness.

He made his way around the browsers and eventually found the entrance to the main building, recessed behind protective Victorian-style brick arches. As he came closer to the heart of the nursery, he overheard a young couple discussing their future. *What about me? What does this place have to do with me and my future as a leader and CEO?* At the main counter, he reached into his pocket and withdrew the business card. He studied the name printed on it: "Adoi, Master Gardener."

"May I help you?"

Doug found himself facing a woman with chocolate-colored skin holding a large fern, similar to the fern imprinted on the business card.

"I'm looking for Adoi," Doug said.

The woman smiled. "I am Adoi. I have been expecting you, Doug."

His mouth opened but, uncharacteristically, no words escaped.

Adoi smiled but said nothing.

"How did you know . . . ?" he asked slowly.

"I feel as if I know you."

Doug felt his head swimming. He wanted to turn and run. *From what? Adoi? The Truth Seekers Garden Center? What kind of name is that for a garden center?*

"Please follow me," Adoi said. He followed her as she walked leisurely along the path, deeper and deeper into what seemed to Doug to be a mysterious paradise.

Adoi remained quiet as she led the way. *Why am I following this woman? What does she have to do with Nan's journey assignment? Is she some kind of leadership legacy tour guide?*

As if reading his thoughts, Adoi stopped and turned to Doug. "I knew your aunt Nan. She was a wonderful woman," she said quietly. "I'm sorry for your loss. It is very difficult to say good-bye to someone who was so central in your life." Doug thought he noticed a tinge of sadness as she spoke. Her next words brought him up short. "Her legacy to all who knew her is so positive, so admirable."

Doug was about to reply, but Adoi had already turned and begun to walk again. *It sounds like Adoi had been close with Nan, yet I know nothing of her or of this garden center. This is crazy.*

She went around a display of plants depicting a high-country meadow and then passed through a wrought iron gate that was partially hidden by thick greenery. As he approached the gate, he noticed an engraved plate affixed to the ornamental iron. A fern was etched into an upper corner of the plate that read "Welcome Truth Seekers."

But it was the appearance of Nan's phrase below that numbed Doug: "Every journey begins with one step."

Adoi led him to a pavilion situated in a clearing where several paths converged. At the center of the pavilion were an ornate wrought iron table and two chairs. Adoi took a seat and motioned to Doug to do the same.

Doug began to sit but then stopped. He eyed the iced tea pitcher resting on the table. A beautiful, signature moose from Mooseland Stoneware adorned the distinctive pitcher and the mugs waiting to be filled. He raised his eyes and saw that Adoi was watching him. "I don't understand." Even before he finished the sentence,

he noticed other Mooseland pieces. Bird feeders graced the branches of the old oak tree, and whimsical garden creatures hung from trellises and pillars overrun with climbing roses and ivy.

Why wasn't I aware of this place? They must be a large account.

"Please sit down," Adoi said as she again motioned to the empty chair.

Doug nodded and eased himself down into the chair as Adoi poured iced tea into the mugs.

"Back there, you said you knew Nan and that you've been expecting me. How is that possible?"

"Your aunt was a gifted gardener. She came by nearly every week to nurture this garden. Over the past few years, we became good friends."

Doug looked around. "This garden? I didn't realize."

"You know that Nan loved gardening, right?"

He nodded. Of course he knew. Whenever she had a moment of free time, she was outside, working in her garden. The garden event center and offices of Mooseland were proof positive of Nan's green thumb.

"I've been expecting you because of your aunt's letter."

"You know about the letter? First Tommy and now you. Did everyone know about the letter but me?"

"Those of us who loved your aunt knew. But not because she betrayed any trust. Your aunt would never have done such a thing."

"I know that," he said guardedly.

"We could never have known Nan without knowing you—you were such a vital part of her life—even if you did not know us."

"Yeah, well that doesn't explain much," Doug replied. "What is it that Nan wants from me? Will I discover my leadership legacy from you? Is that why I'm here?"

"Perhaps it is what your aunt wants for you," Adoi suggested gently. "Nan lived her leadership legacy. She always hoped you would do the same."

"Why would I worry about living my leadership legacy when I had not been given a leadership role? Nan was the leader. My job was to crunch numbers."

"Perhaps your definition of leadership is a bit narrow."

Doug felt a pang of resentment at Adoi's comment. *What right does she have to counsel me? We've known each other less than an hour. She's what? Maybe ten years older than me? She's a gardener. What qualifies her as an authority on Nan or my leadership legacy?*

"Look, I thought Nan wanted success for me. I thought she wanted me to take over Mooseland. If you know about the letter, then you know there's a hitch. I have six months to accomplish Nan's mission of constructing a leadership legacy. Why do I need a leadership legacy? Aren't legacies for old people? I have no idea what I'm supposed to do. Your business card was attached to Nan's letter. So, I took 'one step in my so-called journey' and here I am."

They sat silently for several moments. Finally, Doug spoke. "No secret leadership legacy formula? No words of truth?"

"Words of truth," Adoi's voice mimicked Doug's inflection, but, unlike his voice, Adoi's tone was calm. "You know, the truth is, Nan had exceptional abilities. All these trees and plants you see here benefited from her guidance. She paid attention to them and learned the best way to nourish each one."

Doug shook his head. "I agree that Nan was a great gardener. What is the point?"

"Living things are not carbon copies of one another," Adoi continued. "One regimen of care does not benefit all plants; soil, light, moisture, and temperature must be tailored to each plant's specific needs. Some living things survive in extraordinary circumstances, but if our goal is to thrive and to encourage those around us to thrive, we must consider individual needs. Would you treat an oak tree like you would treat a rose?"

"I am sure that your intention is to help me. But—"

"Your aunt had a special affection for this oak tree," Adoi said, rising and gesturing toward a large tree to Doug's left. "She regarded it as majestic yet humble because it provides shelter for some of nature's more fragile creations, allowing them to mature and thrive. Nan was strong and powerful, yet she constantly found ways to attend to those around her so that they, too, could blossom.

"I believe her understanding of nature was a model for her approach to life. For example, perhaps you can appreciate the good fortune of an orphaned infant who was blessed with a loving relative, one who provided him sanctuary and dedicated her life to nurturing his."

"I know what my aunt did for me," Doug said impatiently. "But what does Nan's green thumb and her affection for an oak tree have to do with my leadership legacy and becoming CEO of Mooseland?"

"I think Nan would be impressed by your question. Indeed, what do a CEO and a master gardener have in common?"

"Am I supposed to take up gardening to find out?"

Adoi fingered a nearby fern. "Isn't this plant beautiful?" she asked. "Healthy and thriving."

"Yes, it's a very nice plant," Doug answered in a patronizing voice. "Beyond that, I'm afraid I'm not much of a horticulture expert. As you've pointed out, Nan was the plant aficionado in our family."

Adoi persisted. "Come closer and tell me what you see."

Doug decided the quickest way to finish this meeting was to do as Adoi asked. Rising and stepping toward the plant, Doug said, "Well, it's green and it appears to be some kind of fern."

"That's a good start. This is a *Microlepia strigosa*," Adoi said as she gently misted the fronds with a hand sprayer. "This is just one of thousands of species of ferns in the world today. What else do you notice?"

"I'm not sure what you mean," Doug replied.

"Different plants require different environments to thrive. Tell me about this plant's environment. What do you notice about the soil and light? Go ahead, touch it. I promise you it is not poisonous."

"Okay, I'll play," Doug began, shaking his head. "The soil is moist and breaks apart easily." Surveying the surroundings, he added, "The fern is mostly in shade. There's a lot of breeze out there," he said, pointing to the screened outer walls, "but it is sheltered back here." Pleased with himself, Doug turned to Adoi. "Is that what you were looking for?"

"Not bad for your first time. Perhaps you are more of a plant aficionado than you realize," Adoi complimented him with a friendly smile. "You paused long enough from

your busy schedule and used your senses to observe another living thing's growth."

Doug was unprepared for what happened next. Lifting it from its safe haven, Adoi placed the cumbersome planter containing the fern in Doug's hands. Not giving him a chance to refuse the gift, Adoi stated, "With you as its caretaker, this plant will continue to thrive because you know what it needs to flourish."

Looking at Adoi through the fronds that partially covered his face, Doug protested. "Adoi, you must be joking. I can't take this plant. I have never cared for plants, and I don't know the first thing about them. Trust me, this plant means more to you than it does to me. You can't seriously think I can keep this thing alive!"

Adoi moved to another fern and began tending to that one as she had the previous one. "You are right that I have enjoyed watching that fern grow for many years. But it will live with you now."

"Adoi, really . . ." Doug was trying to balance the unwieldy pot and follow Adoi.

"Sometimes, Doug, we become caretakers unexpectedly. Unforeseen circumstances place us in a position to be responsible for people and things that were once lovingly tended by another."

Adoi turned and faced Doug, then sealed the terms of their arrangement. "Declining or evading such a responsibility is not an option. Instead, our duty is to provide an environment that ensures the continued growth of that which has been entrusted to us. You have six months before the board meeting. Mooseland Stoneware will flourish under the leadership of someone who understands

this: A large part of gardening is figuring out what you want to grow and providing an environment that is conducive to that growth.

"Sometimes we must observe how others have achieved goals that mirror our own. There is someone you should meet." Adoi drew a business card from her pocket and handed it to Doug.

She turned and started to leave but paused long enough to declare a challenge. "The next CEO of Mooseland Stoneware will become its leader and the custodian of its future—an enviable yet momentous responsibility. I hope that such a person would not be bested by a potted fern."

Doug noticed at once that the image of a fern was embossed in the upper right corner of the card. While he read it, Adoi departed through a screen door. Their meeting was over.

this material has been excerpted from

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