
Life's Journey in Each of Us

Know Your Purpose in Life



The Everest Leadership Academy

The Essence of Leadership and Life

Raymond V. Sozzi, Sr.



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Acknowledgments

I dedicate this book to my dear friend, Kathryn Webster, who embodies the essence of The Everest Leadership Academy. She is the ultimate example of someone who understands that struggle is not an interruption of life's journey – it is part of the journey itself.

I want to also acknowledge the many people who contributed their time by providing their stories that were the inspiration for this book. I was so moved by their stories.

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And last, but not least, this book is in honor of my beloved wife, Elaine, who was my teacher and North Star.

CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION



After countless conversations over the past year with people of all ages and from all walks of life, it became quite apparent to me that my prior book, “The Leader in Each of Us,” resonated strongly with a much wider audience than just younger people in their transformative years. What was the common thread with these people? *“I wish I had this book when I was a teenager.”*

However, in my view, it is never too late to learn, to change, and to improve. This sequel continues the story of “The Leader in Each of Us” by addressing that much wider audience.

At The Everest Leadership Academy, we believe that, when it comes to living a successful and happy life – a life with meaning and impact – what truly matters is the journey. However, our journeys vary greatly. Some people hold on to a victim

mindset because it gives them an excuse not to try. Others hold on to fear, because that somehow feels safer than risking failure.

However, success stems not from what life brings us but from the attitude we bring to life. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive events. But a life lived in fear lacking self-esteem is no life at all. There is no journey – only an endless, lifeless, and repetitious cycle.

I also understand one size does not fit all. There are all kinds of people in our world. Focusing exclusively on our own lives – our hopes, dreams, successes, and failures – leaves too much unconsidered. We must also examine our world more broadly, more thoughtfully. I love talking to people and hearing their stories. I love interacting with them and treating everybody with interest, respect, engagement, and dignity because that's what unleashes their talents within. I know what is possible because of my own life experiences. I really love showing people the

purpose of life, how we can be more human. In my view, we derive more value by helping those around us and those who follow us. This is my true purpose in life.

Humanizing conversations, focusing on the goodness in people (their soft spots), and understanding their upbringing are crucial to embracing others. Everybody has a story. Do not prejudge other people until you understand their stories and try to connect to that soft spot.

Life's storms certainly arrive in many forms – loss, failure, uncertainty, heartbreak, disappointment. And though they sometimes feel like setbacks, these storms are also one of the most powerful ways we grow. Struggle is not an interruption of life's journey. It's an irreplaceable, central part of the journey itself. Like storms in nature, our own personal storms clear away what no longer serves us, reshape our inner landscape, and fertilize the seeds of who we are becoming. Of course, people in different circumstances

face different obstacles and different choices. But we mustn't let our circumstances constrain us. The condition of one's life should not determine the outcome of one's life.

In moments of difficulty, we're pushed out of our comfort zone. At first, this can feel like the whole world is falling apart. Our first instinct is often to run away from our story and start over somewhere else. Of course, we can't – but we can turn the page.

Hopefully with time, we realize the storm is a kind of rebirth. Challenges force us to confront truths we might otherwise avoid, develop strengths we didn't know we had, and discover resilience that only emerges under pressure. Just as muscles grow by being stretched and strained, we build our character through adversity.

Struggle teaches us patience, humility, and perspective. It teaches us to appreciate calmness when it returns and makes small victories feel meaningful. More importantly,

our struggles can connect us to others. When we endure hardship, we learn empathy. When we rise again, we become an example to inspire others.

Growth rarely happens in comfort. Development requires friction, challenge, and the courage to keep moving forward even when the path is unclear. The storms of life do not come to destroy us. They come to reveal us, even though the purpose might not be clear at that time. When we come out on the other side, we often find a stronger, wiser, more grounded version of ourselves waiting to be lived.

We learn through experience, through mistakes, and through successes and failures alike. Some people live many years without understanding the underlying patterns, while others, with reflection and awareness, discover principles that guide them toward peace, strength, and meaning.

Life is not about perfection. It is about direction. And direction begins with

understanding. When you learn to think clearly, act purposefully, and live wisely, life itself becomes a gentle, powerful, and generous teacher.

Life presents us with countless chances – to grow, to learn, to love, to create, to change. But not everyone sees them. Sometimes we're so focused on our problems or fears that we miss what is right in front of us. At other times, we recognize the opportunity but delay action, thinking it will come again. But time moves forward, not backward. Opportunities are temporary visitors – they reward the alert and disappear from the distracted.

To become more conscious, courageous, and self-confident individuals in life, we must focus carefully on discovering who we are, who we want to become, how we can reach that point, and how we can discover our inner strength and reach our true potential.

As I was growing up, I found the courage to follow my heart and intuition and focus on

my true purpose in life – to reach out to other people and have an influence in their lives. As you support others, you actually start to find what you need in your own journey. Both improving myself and making a meaningful journey by touching the lives of others added immense value to my life.

I hope this book will serve as a source of inspiration to help you recognize your inner potential and bring it to life. It consists of articles by thought leaders as well as my own experiences, which I offer only as tools to inspire you as you carve your own path.

Everything else is secondary.

CHAPTER 2 – STORMS

“Leadership Motivation and Growth”

by J. B. Kellogg



The following pages of this chapter were taken from J.B. Kellogg, an acclaimed inspirational author and motivational speaker.

We are all sailing across the sea of life.

And as such we're bound to battle through some powerful storms.

But that's to be expected because we were never promised smooth sailing - right? Of course not.

But we were promised if we remain positive and don't give up, we will eventually reach the other side.

This recent storm is big. No doubt it struck with a heavy hand, a bolt of lightning out of a clear night sky.

It's created much chaos. But what do we learn in the chaos? What do we do to survive the storms? To be better prepared for the coming storms?

You see chaos is a normal part of life. Struggle is an essential part of growth and development.

A mighty oak tree begins with a little seed that is planted in the ground and it fights its way up into the light, only to be faced with screaming winds, heavy rain, freezing snow, burning sun, and endless adversity year after year to become a beautiful and strong oak tree because its only in the storms that we can grow.

It's only when we are truly tested that you really know how tough you are. It's only when you're tested that your character can develop.

The storms develop your confidence and as your confidence grows, so does your capacity. With each wave you gain strength and confidence for the next one. If you're fighting a good fight right now just tell yourself, it's been specially designed that way to develop your strength and confidence for the next level of excellence. The next level of leadership.

So, when the next storm comes, you'll have more confidence because of the past victory and when you win that one, you'll have more confidence for the next.

That's why the elderly are wise. They've been through more storms.

So, approach the storms with a growth mindset. Appreciate the storms. Respect the storms. And defeat the storms.

If we do this as a community, we'll be unstoppable. No challenge will be too great. No problem will be too big.

Resistance makes us stronger. The resistance of air is needed for a plane to fly. The resistance of water is needed for a boat to float. The resistance of gravity is needed for us to walk. Resistance is meant to develop us. Let's embrace it.

Let us all be proud graduates of the University of Adversity. Afraid of no obstacle that is placed before us.

Every opportunity has difficulty, and every difficulty has opportunity.

Let's focus on the opportunities in our difficulties.

Once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive.

You won't even be sure whether or not the storm is really over. But one thing is certain when you come out the other side you won't be the same as when you went in. You will be smarter, faster, tougher, stronger, braver.

The storms aren't made to break us; they're made to make us.

The greatest sailors, companies, and people are the ones that have been through the worst of storms and not given up. The fog was thick, the waves were strong, the temperatures were freezing but they never gave up. They kept moving forward. They kept rowing the boat. They kept adjusting their sails. And the stronger the storm would become the stronger their will to overcome. You see, one or the other will eventually break. You or the storm. And as long as you don't give up, lose your focus or lose your will to win...the storm will eventually break first.

CHAPTER 3 – EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND HAPPINESS

Harvard Business Review Press



There is a misconception that happiness is merely being cheerful, joyous, and content all the time or always having a smile on your face. But that's only partially true. Being truly happy and leading a rich life means taking the good with the bad and learning how to reframe the bad. One of the highest levels of happiness we can achieve lies in *giving*, because giving connects you to something greater than yourself. When you give, you shift your focus away from self-centered desires and toward the well-being of others. Giving nourishes us because it reflects the best part of human nature – compassion.

Experiencing a wide range of emotions – both positive and negative – is linked to positive mental and physical well-being.

Many people think of happiness as some type of destination – that once we reach this destination, we will be permanently happy. However, happiness is a *means* and not an *end*. We might think that if we get what we want, we'll be happy. But our brains can actually perceive things quite differently. What's really important is the journey.

We're not happy when we're chasing happiness. We're happiest when we're not thinking about it, when we're enjoying the present moment because we're lost in a meaningful project, working toward a higher goal, or helping someone else.

Happiness is not the absence of suffering – it's the ability to rebound from it.

Happiness is not the same as joy. Happiness includes contentment, well-being, and the emotional flexibility to experience a full range of emotions. Happiness is not found solely in what we receive. It also comes (in greater measure) through what we give.

The more frequently we experience a sense of progress, the more likely we are to be creatively productive in the long run.

The power of progress is fundamental to human nature. When people realize they have clear and meaningful goals, sufficient resources, and helpful colleagues, they get an instant boost to their emotions and their motivation to do their absolute best.

There are two critical skills in creating sustainable performance: *vitality* – the sense of being alive, passionate, and excited – and *learning* – the growth from acquiring new knowledge and skills. People who develop their abilities are more likely to believe in their potential for further growth.

When our lives include empathy, gratitude, and meaning – we are happier.

CHAPTER 4 – LIFE'S JOURNEY

*“Owning our story and loving ourselves
through that process is the bravest thing
we’ll ever do.” - Brené Brown*

The Author's Personal Experiences



I believe there is no elevator to success. You have to use the stairs. In other words, you have to climb the mountain yourself – but you don’t have to climb it alone. None of us grows up to be a competent, mature person without the help of others. Success comes from knowing your purpose in life and growing to reach your maximum potential – what experts call self-actualization.

Life’s journey is not a sprint, nor a straight line. I view it as more like an expedition, one that takes courage, intention, and trust. Like any mountain climber stepping up into unknown terrain, you stand at the trailhead

with a choice: Will you step forward into an unfamiliar discovery or stay behind in the comfort of the familiar?

In my life, I've come up against many obstacles, mudslides, and avalanches – personal and professional. With every setback, I've learned, regrouped, and continued to climb, fueled by renewed confidence that virtually anything is possible – if you're willing to work hard and learn from the inevitable failures along the way. If you don't fail, you're not trying hard enough. To get something you've never had, you must do something you've never done.

I fully understand that most successful people today are the ones who failed the most previously. Failure is not the opposite of success – it's part of the path that leads to success. Every successful person you admire has faced disappointment, rejection, and defeat. What makes them different isn't that they avoided failure. It's that they refused to give up after failing.

Stop focusing on what you can't do, and, instead, think about new ways to achieve your goals. What we think or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do. Remember: Indecision is sometimes worse than a wrong decision, because doing nothing guarantees you make no progress. When we avoid choosing, we give control of our lives to circumstances or other people. Before you climb higher, you must travel lighter. The climb ahead will always reveal what the last journey concealed. A base camp is not just a location. It's a lifeline. Returning to base camp is not retreating. It's preparing to rise again – with added wisdom, not added weight. The summit gives you vision. The base camp gives you strength. You need both.

However, we shouldn't live on the summit indefinitely. The summit inspires us, but the base camp sustains us. The mountaintop moments are breathtaking, but they are temporary. They give perspective, direction, and a glimpse of what is possible, but we

cannot live there permanently.

What you do with your life comes down to *choices*. You can create a happy journey by choosing to be connected to others and to engage in meaningful work. You can write the script of your own life. Now, we certainly can't ignore the fact that some of us may be deprived of the opportunities to make these choices in our lives.

We choose neither the circumstances nor the environments of our early childhood, but that's where we form our personal principles. However, you are not merely a product of your experiences or environment. You're also a product of *what you do with those experiences and environment*. It's all up to you to take what you're given and maximize your success and happiness. It's really easy to fall into the trap of believing that what we do is more important than who we are. Of course, it's the opposite that's true: Who we are ultimately determines what we do!

The roots of all our lives go very, very deep,

and we can't really understand another person unless we have the chance to know who that person has been, what they have achieved, who and what they like, how they've suffered, and what they believe. Who we are in the present encompasses who we were in the past. You cannot step forward in your journey if you can't leave behind the pain, the roles that pigeonholed you, and the cycles that kept you stuck. The truth is, everyone has dark chapters in their past – times of failure, weakness, or loss. But no matter how dark your past may be, those chapters cannot define your future – unless you allow them to.

Ability (education) x effort x attitude =
success and happiness.

Attitude is the most important factor. It influences how we accept challenges, how we cope with failures, and whether we find the inner fulfillment that makes working inherently worthwhile.

CHAPTER 5 – TOOLS WE NEED FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY

*Excerpted From Books by Raymond Sozzi, Sr.
and Amine El Rhanni*



Love of Self

True love begins within – when you respect, forgive, and accept yourself. When you love yourself, you stop chasing validation and begin attracting genuine love.

Before we can ask others to love us, we must love ourselves. Before we can ask others to believe in us, we must believe in ourselves. Feeling good about ourselves is essential in our ability to love others. Every act of kindness and every moment of empathy are reflections of love. When you give love freely – through a smile, a kind word, a firm handshake – you make the world a better place. A life without love may be safe, but it is

empty. According to Brené Brown, a researcher and storyteller, “Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing we’ll ever do.”

Education

We must master the classroom lessons – but that’s not enough. We must develop a lifelong love of learning and never let our minds be idle. Be a voracious reader and learn from those who have succeeded.

However, intelligence is about much more than acquiring information. True intelligence lies in how we use knowledge and integrate it into our lives. Information alone is not enough. The real challenge is utilizing that knowledge in meaningful and strategic ways.

Education is important, but what truly matters is the perspective it provides. Just working hard is not enough for success. It also matters *how* you work. There’s more to education than what the education system teaches you. The greater value starts when

you apply what you learn. By working smart, applying knowledge effectively, and developing a visionary approach, you can achieve real success.

Knowledge is knowing what something is. Wisdom lies in understanding what to do with that knowledge. Knowledge is limited to defining something, but wisdom involves discovering ways to effectively apply that knowledge in all areas of your life.

What sets you apart from others is not how much knowledge you have, but how you use and implement that knowledge. The people who achieve their ambitions are not necessarily the smartest or most talented. They're often simply the people who act, adjust, and keep moving. That's why wise people speak less and act more. Their strength lies in example, not argument.

Hard Work

Work hard and work smart – this work ethic promotes passion and pride in all you do and sets you apart from the crowd. It can take

you very, very far. Surround yourself with positive people and environments that support your work ethic and goals.

The reason people delay work is fear – fear of failure, imperfection, or criticism. But avoiding work doesn't eliminate those fears. It strengthens them. The only way to overcome fear is through action. Every time you face a task directly, you gain confidence and reduce anxiety.

Perseverance

It might be the ultimate paradox: It takes failure to succeed. Don't let setbacks stop you because they are essential to success. Maintain your purpose despite difficulties, obstacles, and discouragement, and continue steadfastly in the face of barriers to achieving success. Ensure that your passion to succeed remains strong regardless of the struggles and setbacks you encounter. The paths drawn by society and parenting might prevent you from drafting your own stories. However, once you start constructing a life based on

your own values and goals, you achieve true freedom. And if you do your best, even if you fail, you can stand proud in the end.

Winners keep hope alive when circumstances are tough. They understand that failure is temporary, that storms eventually pass, and that perseverance can turn defeat into victory. Challenges may delay success, but they cannot deny it to those who persevere. Life is not about avoiding failure but about transforming it into growth.

Every successful person has failed, but the successful person never regards himself or herself as a failure. Meet failure with the right attitude. Thomas Edison, the most prolific inventor in history, was considered unteachable as a youngster. His famous quote is instructive: "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Albert Einstein, a genius, was told by a teacher that he would "never amount to much."

Self-Confidence

Without self-confidence, we may become useless. If you lose the ability to believe in yourself, you're done for. You must believe in yourself to achieve any task, no matter the odds, no matter the difficulty, no matter the adversity. You need an unwavering belief that you can accomplish something that no one else believes you can do. You may not fully achieve your dream, but you will come remarkably close. Action creates confidence, while hesitation creates doubt.

Every challenge you overcome strengthens your character, expands your limits, and builds your confidence. Each obstacle becomes a steppingstone, strengthening your resilience and self-belief. Over time, your struggles transform you into someone capable of greatness.

Confident individuals take on more responsibilities in their professional lives and are more likely to rise to leadership positions. Instead of seeing mistakes as failures, they

view them as learning opportunities. Self-confidence is one of the fundamental keys to success.

However, don't make the common mistake of confusing humility with weakness. With humility, you know your worth without boasting. Humility does *not* mean accepting mistreatment. You can be kind without being submissive, and patient without being silent in the face of humiliation. True humility and strength coexist when you act with calm dignity. When you respect yourself, others learn to respect you, too.

What distinguishes winners from losers? Winners steadfastly concentrate on what they *can* do, not on what they *can't* do.

Courage

Courage is one of the most fundamental traits inherent in humans. It is one of the most crucial elements, often determining how an individual responds to situations they encounter in life. Courage, in particular moral courage, enables an individual to stand

up for their values, resist norms, and maintain their personal authenticity. When you face your fears, your courage grows, making you a stronger person. Define your own life. Throughout our journeys, we all inevitably encounter fear and anxiety. Only those who move forward with courage can shape their own life. Find your courage, take risks, and draft your own story.

Small acts of courage can play an outsized role in defining who we are. Our fears set boundaries in our lives – sometimes without our conscious knowledge – and we operate within those limits. Fear is not necessarily the enemy – inaction is. When you act from fear, you unconsciously attract the very outcomes you wish to avoid. You can recover from failure, but you can't recover from a lost opportunity. Hesitation kills more dreams than mistakes ever will. Opportunities are everywhere – but they only reveal themselves to those who are prepared to recognize and act on them. Life does not give chances to the idle. It rewards the ones who are ready and

willing.

Respect for Others

Honor the efforts and accomplishments of everyone you meet because everyone has accomplished something. Every individual you meet is worthy of respect.

A smile is one of the simplest yet most powerful gestures in human life. A smile invites communication and trust, and the most beautiful smiles are those that come from sincerity.

Attitude

Our attitude determines our approach to life – our people relationships – and the difference between success and failure. Attitude affects our outcomes more often than most of us realize.

A person's attitude is shaped by many factors as we mature. It's possible it all starts with pre-birth where personality and temperament may be formed. Birth introduces all of us to life's journey. From age

1 to 6, we form word expressions and seek adult confirmation. From 7 to 12, we begin to develop a self-image and seek exposure to new experiences. The teenage years are intertwined with peer groups and physical appearance. Later in life, family, career success, and one's assessment of life become the main focus.

We're all born as distinct individuals and develop specific attitudes as we grow up. Environment is the key because it develops our "belief system." We usually act in direct response to our self-image which increases the likelihood that others will, too.

The Right Mindset

We should always study those who have achieved remarkable things. Successful people are not lucky. They have strategies, habits, and mindsets that set them apart. They plan carefully, take calculated risks, and stay consistent when others give up. They manage time well, seek knowledge continuously, and learn from their own

errors quickly.

Every person you meet can be a teacher. Some show you what to do, while others show you what never to do. Regardless, both are equally important and valuable. Remember, wisdom is not only in living many years, but in learning from the years that others have already lived.

Reading is not only about acquiring knowledge. It also shapes our mindset. The more we read, the more we understand how others think, feel, and solve problems. Reading develops empathy, emotional intelligence, and creativity.

The more we know, the fewer mistakes we make. Ignorance is one of the main causes of human suffering and failure. Most of the mistakes we make in life are not due to bad intentions but to a lack of knowledge. When we learn from wise people, proven methods, and trustworthy sources, we dramatically increase our chances of success. When you think well, you act with purpose. When you

act with purpose, you achieve meaningful results.

In the end, complete success is not measured only by what you achieve, but by how peacefully and meaningfully you live. A balanced life allows you to enjoy success without losing your health or happiness. It helps you build not just a career but a life worth living. The secret is authenticity – letting your smile be the reflection of a kind heart.

Inner Strength, Emotional Control, and Emotional Intelligence

One of the greatest forms of freedom is emotional freedom – the ability to live according to your values and beliefs without being controlled by the opinions, moods, or expectations of others. Too often, we allow ourselves to be prisoners of what others think or feel. To live a truly fulfilled and peaceful life, we must learn to manage our emotions – and not let the emotions of others dictate how we think, feel, or act. We must

understand that we are responsible for our own feelings – and others are responsible for theirs. Real peace comes from being true to yourself – not from pleasing everyone else.

When you develop inner strength, you not only improve your life. You also become a source of stability and hope for those around you.

The best way to inspire others is not by forcing your ways on them, but by living your own life authentically. Leadership by example is far more powerful than leadership by control.

Mentors and Role Models

No one achieves greatness alone. Every successful person stands on the shoulders of those who came before him or her – mentors, collaborators, and friends who bring insight, skill, and perspective. Role models and mentors – especially in the early years – are critical to a successful journey.

Savvy, experienced people help you overcome obstacles by reinforcing the right values, providing a sounding board about major decisions, and teaching you their hard-earned lessons. Be sure to find a role model whose best aspects you want to emulate and incorporate in your own life. Think about the people you admire and analyze what values they embody. The wisest leaders are those who know how to bring together people of varied backgrounds and talents and enable each to shine in their own way.

In an average lifetime a person walks about 65,000 miles – about two and a half times around the world. Where will your steps take you? How will you use the rest of the miles you're given?

CHAPTER 6 – RESILIENCE

*“Facing Down Rejection and Criticism on the
Road to Success”*

Mark McGuinness

■

Introduction

Learn to succeed despite adversity. You will apply for opportunities and be rejected, perhaps many times. And when you succeed in getting your work out in public, you will be criticized – sometimes fairly, sometimes unfairly, and sometimes viciously.

Ken Langone, cofounder of The Home Depot, said, “What distinguishes the winners from the losers is the ability to turn adversity around: resilience and creativity.”

Why do Rejection and Criticism hurt so Much?

Let's review Maslow's hierarchy of human needs:

- **Physiological** – oxygen, food, and sleep
- **Safety** – security, employment and shelter.
- **Love and belonging** – family and friendship.
- **Esteem** – self-esteem, confidence, and respect
- **Self-actualization**

Belonging is clearly threatened by rejection while self-esteem is threatened by criticism.

Why You Need to Build Resilience

The list of people who succeed on their first attempt is remarkably short. The list of people who encounter rejection, criticism, disappointment, failure, and other setbacks before they gain recognition and reward for their efforts – that list is much longer.

Somehow, however, they endure despite the adversity. They learn from their mistakes, improve their skills, and persist until they succeed. Learning from failures and adapting will help you face your fears with greater confidence.

One of Michael Jordan's best-known quotes sums it up perfectly: "I can accept failure; everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying. I've failed over and over again in my life and that is why I succeeded."

Reggie Jackson struck out 2600 times in his career – the most in the history of baseball. But you don't hear about the strikeouts. People only remember the home runs.

Thomas Edison conducted 1,000 failed experiments. But experiment No. 1,001 was the lightbulb. Each attempt, though seemingly a failure, actually provided him with the necessary knowledge for his next step.

To succeed, you must develop the ability to bounce back – *resilience* – the ability to keep pursuing your goals, driven by passion in spite of adversity.

Mindfulness is key – pay attention to your experiences: physical, mental, and emotional. This helps you develop the psychological strength and flexibility that

combine to produce resilience. You understand situations better and are more vividly aware of your thoughts and feelings. Consequently, they don't affect you as much as before.

Rejection

Rejection is normal – get used to it. Everybody gets rejected – even the best of the best. The best actually get rejected *more* because they put themselves out there more. They're willing to take more chances and pursue more opportunities. As Babe Ruth once said, “Never let the fear of striking out get in your way.”

Make a list of your top five heroes. Read up on their careers, their stories of rejection and perseverance in the face of adversity. How did they cope with rejection?

Seven Guaranteed Ways to Make Rejection Feel Worse

1. **Take it Personally:** Internalize the failure by repeatedly telling yourself, “I’m

a failure” or “I’m a loser.”

2. **Dwell on It:** Keep replaying the negative experience over and over again.
3. **Replay the Regrets:** Hindsight is always 20:20. Regrets come when you look back and say, “I could have... I should have... and yet I was persuaded by someone or something else.” Instead, go with your gut and make the best decision you can at the time with what you know at the time. Be prepared to accept you will make some bad decisions.
4. **Predict Failure:** Believe that past failures are a predictor of future failures. “I’ll never succeed... I’m doomed to failure... What’s the point in trying again?” Instead try telling yourself, “Things will be different next time... If I learn the lessons and improve, I’ll have a better chance.”
5. **Make Pointless Comparisons:** To a certain point, comparison can be valuable, inspiring you to emulate others’

success. But if you're not careful, it becomes a stick to beat yourself with. Instead, tell yourself, "I'm competing with myself, no one else... I will succeed on my own terms."

6. **Indulge in Self-Pity:** You can bemoan your plight and feel sorry for yourself. Or you can focus on the reality of your situation. It's too easy to say, "This is so unfair... I deserve better than this!" A healthier response is to tell yourself, "I can do better than them... It feels unfair, but I have to deal with it."
7. **Exaggerate:** Needlessly repeat that "This is the absolute worst... What a total disaster!" Instead, tell yourself, "OK, I failed again, but it's not the end of the world... This is a big disappointment, but I've bounced back before, so I can do it again."

If you want to achieve something extraordinary in your life, then rejection is an inescapable part of the price. When you

stop taking rejection personally and accept that it's part of the process, you start paying the price for success. It's only worth paying the price if the ultimate prize is worth it.

Criticism

Criticism can strengthen rather than undermine your self-confidence. We should remain open to criticism and view it as an opportunity for growth. Constructive criticism allows us to recognize our shortcomings and take steps to improve. Instead of taking offense, view criticism as valuable feedback. Praise comforts us, but criticism helps us grow. When you identify and actively work on your weaknesses, your confidence grows step by step.

Learning from criticism also develops humility. It reminds us that we are not perfect and that growth is a lifelong journey. Criticism keeps us grounded and open-minded. When you see it as an opportunity rather than an attack, you turn it into an ally

instead of an enemy. Let it refine you, not define you.

Success

Success is not a destination – it's a journey. And this journey gains true value only when it holds meaning for you. I feel strongly that knowing your purpose in life and having an optimistic view of the world is a key driver of success.

But don't forget: Success is not necessarily the key to happiness. It's the other way around: Happiness is usually the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you are more likely to succeed.

Ultimately, true success doesn't come from avoiding risks but in confronting them with determination and purpose.

Leap before you look

When I look back at all the leaps I've taken, it's hard for me to regret any of them. Sometimes the lessons were painful – but there was always a lesson if I paid attention.

And each time I tasted success, it made the failures and disappointments worthwhile,

I can also think of a few times where I faced a leap but didn't have the courage. I do regret those missed chances – because I'll never know what would have happened if I had seized them.

CHAPTER 7 — WHAT WILL MATTER

How Do You Want To Be Remembered?

By Michael Josephson



Ready or not, someday it will all come to an end.

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours, or days.

All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame, and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.

It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed.

Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire.

The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.

It won't matter where you came from or what side of the tracks you lived on at the end.

It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant.

Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?

What will matter is not what you bought but what you built; not what you got but what you gave.

What will matter is not your success but your significance.

What will matter is not what you learned but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage, or sacrifice that enriched, empowered, or encouraged others

to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence
but your character.

What will matter is not how many people
you knew but how many will feel a lasting
loss when you're gone.

What will matter is not your memories but
the memories of those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be
remembered, by whom, and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by
accident.

It's not a matter of circumstance but of
choice.

Choose to live a life that matters.

CHAPTER 8 – THE EVEREST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S 10 PRINCIPLES

*Guiding Principles to Becoming a Great
Leader as we Embark on our Life's Journey*



1. Leadership is not a title

Leadership isn't necessarily what or how you do it, but rather *who you are*. It centers on your character. True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned. It comes only from influence. We can all learn to be leaders.

2. Leadership style is primarily a handshake and a smile

That's not just any handshake, but a firm handshake. And it's not just any smile, but a sincere, caring smile. The firm handshake conveys self-confidence and

the sincere smile and direct eye contact indicate you are interested in the other person.

3. Leadership skills embrace empathetic toughness

You must first be caring enough about people to demand their absolute best. Empathy is your attempt to better understand the other person by getting to know their perspective. There are three distinct kinds of empathy:

- **Cognitive empathy** – the ability to understand another person's perspective.
- **Emotional empathy** – the ability to feel what someone else feels.
- **Empathic concern** – the ability to sense what another person needs from you.

Toughness must embrace trust, which motivates people to go beyond mere compliance with authority. The more

people trust you and the more they are trusted, the more they will risk.

4. There is no elevator to success

You have to take your journey one step at a time, but you don't have to climb it alone. Mountain climbers always climb with a guide who shows them the way.

Role models and mentors help you avoid mistakes early in life. These role models could be a family member, a teacher, an athletic coach, or a trusted friend.

5. Success is defined as knowing your purpose in life

Define the end game and plan to achieve it. Success means being all you can be by achieving your purpose in life. It is a qualitative measurement, not a quantitative yardstick

6. Leadership means being proactive and action-oriented

Stop focusing on what you can't do. Instead, think about new ways of getting

the job done. What we think or what we believe are, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.

7. Leadership is more than knowledge (IQ) by itself – it also encompasses the wise application of knowledge (EQ)

What may be more important is the wise use of knowledge and good judgement, which requires EQ leadership skills. IQ is a score derived from a standardized intelligence test (the hard skills). EQ is a measure of a person's emotional intelligence (the soft skills). IQ represents abilities such as quantitative reasoning, visual and spatial processing, and fluid reasoning. EQ, on the other hand, represents the ability to perceive how others feel; to control one's own emotions; the ability to relate to others; the use of emotion to facilitate social

communications; and the ability to identify emotions.

Both IQ and EQ play important roles in your overall success. Rather than focusing on which factors might have a more dominant influence, the greatest benefit may lie in learning to improve skills in multiple areas. In addition to strengthening certain cognitive abilities, you can also acquire new EQ skills that will serve you well in many different areas in your life.

8. We don't choose the circumstances of our early childhood, but that's where our personal principles form

As expressed by renowned psychoanalyst Carl Jung, "I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become." It's up to each of us to take what we're given and maximize our success and happiness.

9. What we do with our life is a choice

We create a happy journey by choosing to be connected to others and to engage in meaningful work. You write the script of your own life.

10. Attitude is critical to success and great leadership

Ability (education) x effort x attitude = success.

The right attitude is the most critical component. Here are six axioms about attitude and the impact it can have on your life:

- Our attitude determines our approach to life.
- Our attitude determines our people relationships.
- Our attitude is the difference between success and failure.
- Our attitude affects the outcome more than anything else.
- Our attitude can turn our problems into blessings.

- Our attitude can give us a positive perspective.

Eliminate these words completely	Add these words to your vocabulary
I can't	I can
If	I will
I don't think	I know
I don't have the time	I will make the time
Maybe	Positively
I'm afraid of	I am confident

CHAPTER 9 – FAVORITE QUOTES

Profound Statements Are Often Found in Very Few Words



Over the years, I've read countless biographies of business and political leaders, entrepreneurs, and other thought leaders from around the globe. I've often found myself writing down key phrases and quotes from these leaders that aptly describe the philosophies and principles by which I've tried to live my life. Let me leave you with a number of them that I hope you'll find as inspirational as I have.

"Good judgement comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment."

– Walter Wriston (Citicorp)

"If you take no risks, you will suffer no defeats. But if you take no risks, you win no

victories.”

– President Richard M Nixon

“Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.”

– Samuel Johnson

“We should not let our fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes.”

– President John F. Kennedy

“Others can stop you temporarily; only you can do it permanently.”

– Don Ward

“True success is overcoming the fear of being unsuccessful.”

– Paul Sweeney

“Never give up. Never, never, never.”

– Sir Winston Churchill

“Nothing can stop a person with the right attitude from achieving his/her goal; nothing on earth can help the person with the wrong mental attitude.”

– President Thomas Jefferson

“The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.”

– Vince Lombardi

“A life isn’t significant except for its impact on other lives.”

– Jackie Robinson

“Your character is your most effective means of persuasion.”

– Aristotle

“Leadership is action, not position.”

– Donald McGannon

“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”

– Maya Angelou

“If you strive for excellence, you may not always succeed at leading, but you will certainly succeed at living.”

– Michael Eisner

“As long as a person doesn’t know what he doesn’t know, he doesn’t grow.”

– John Maxwell

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

– Sir Winston Churchill

“A good leader is a person who takes a little more than his/her share of the blame, and little less than his/her share of the credit.”

– John Maxwell

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”

– Warren Buffett

“Some say failure should be avoided at all costs. That cost is too high. I see failure more as a fertilizer for success.”

– Warren Buffett

“When you are faced with a decision, the best thing is to do the right thing; the next best thing is to do the wrong thing; and the worst thing is to do nothing.”

– Roger Enrico (PepsiCo)

“There are four kinds of people: those who make things happen; those to whom things happen; those who watch things happen; and those who don’t even know things are happening.”

– Louis Gerstner (IBM)

“If you don’t know how to lose, you’ll never know how to win.”

– Jack Welch (GE)

“There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don’t care who gets the credit.”

– President Ronald Reagan

“To be conscious that you are ignorant of the facts is a great step to knowledge.”

– Benjamin Disraeli

“Adaptability to a changing environment is really the best life skill you can possess.”

– Samuel Johnson

“No person will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself / herself or get all

the credit for doing it.”

– Andrew Carnegie

*“Some succeed because they are destined to;
most succeed because they are determined to.”*

– Anatole France

*“People don’t care how much you know until
they know how much you care.”*

– Often attributed to President Theodore
Roosevelt

*“Good leaders inspire people to have
confidence in their leader. Great leaders
inspire people to have confidence in
themselves.”*

– Eleanor Roosevelt

*“Before you are a leader, success is all about
growing yourself. When you become a leader,
success is all about growing others.”*

– Jack Welch

*“My greatest strength as a consultant is to be
ignorant and ask a few questions.”*

– Peter Drucker

“Any leader who asks the right questions of

the right people has the potential to discover and develop great ideas.”

– Thomas Edison

“There’s a saying that’s dead wrong. ‘Why did you climb the mountain?’ I climbed the mountain because it was there.’ That’s utter nonsense... You climbed the mountain because you were there and you were curious if you could do it. You wondered what it would be like.”

– Larry Ellison (Oracle Corp.)

“The minute you take away all the artificial barriers between you and your people, you’re on your way to phenomenal success. But it takes a little humility.”

– Bernie Marcus (The Home Depot)

“I have a healthy respect for my teammates. Everyone’s trying to achieve. You’re all trying to climb the same mountain... I show up to work every day just like them trying to do the same thing. We have the same goals... but my connection with them is through joy and love. It’s not through fear. It’s not through results. That’s not how I lead.”

– Tom Brady (NFL quarterback and

broadcaster)

“Ninety-nine percent of failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.”

– George Washington Carver

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, its thinking of yourself less of the time.”

– C.S. Lewis

“Integrity will take a leader farther than any other single quality.”

– George Eliot

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The ability to ask the right question is more than half the battle of finding the answer.”

– Thomas J. Watson

“You can't talk about leadership without talking about responsibility and accountability... You can't separate the two. A leader must delegate responsibility and

provide the freedom to make decisions, and then be held accountable for the results.”

– Buck Rodgers

“If your actions inspire others to dream, more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

– President John Quincy Adams

“To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart.”

– Eleanor Roosevelt

“My job is not to be easy on people. My job is to make them better.”

– Steve Jobs

“Power isn’t control at all – power is strength, and giving that strength to others. A leader isn’t someone who forces others to make him/her stronger. A leader is someone willing to give his strength to others that they may have the strength to stand on their own.”

– Beth Revis

“Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.”

– John C. Maxwell

“One person with commitment accomplishes more than a thousand with an opinion.”

– Orrin Woodward

“I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure, which is: Try to please everybody.”

– Herbert Swope

“Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish.”

– Sam Walton

“Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently.”

– Henry Ford

“The key to successful leadership is influence, not authority.”

– Kenneth H. Blanchard

CHAPTER 10 – CONCLUSION



I hope this book has given you different perspectives on life. As I mentioned in the introduction, when it comes to living a fulfilling career and productive life – a life with meaning and impact – what truly matters is the journey. As Lilian Dickson, the missionary and author, once said, “You can spend your life any way you want, but you get to spend it only once.” And we create a happy and productive journey by choosing to connect with others and to engage in meaningful work.

Among all the relationships we form in life, family holds a unique and unmatched place. Friends may come and go, opportunities may rise and fall, and achievements may fade with time, but family remains a constant foundation.

It is extremely important to know your purpose in life in preparing for the last chapter. It's worth the struggle to discover who you really are and how you, in your own way, can build a life that means a lot to you. As you get older, you may be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do.

Purpose is the “why” behind what you do. It is expressed through your gifts, your passion, and your compassion. It is what makes you come alive and helps others come alive, too. Without it, you will spend your life chasing approval, imitating others, or shrinking yourself to fit into spaces you were never meant to fill.

Purpose is not fixed. It grows as you grow. It develops from lessons learned – through serving, listening, failing, and learning. The goal of life is not simply to survive but to have a purpose.

In this book I have tried to show ways to get closer to your true self and to share essential

criteria that can serve as a guiding light on your journey. However, true transformation lies in how you apply these ideas in your life.

In the end, we are left with memories and a picture album. However, death is not the enemy – a life unlived is. Live fully, love deeply, and let life speak for you long after you are gone. Once again, remember that life is a journey – not a straight road, but a path filled with turns, lessons, and moments that define who we become. In the last chapter of life, when yesterdays far exceed the tomorrows, we will then know how well we traveled on our journey.

The “Life’s Journey in Each of Us” doesn’t end with the last page of this book. It is the turning of a page. What comes next is not a continuation of who you have been, but an unfolding of who you are becoming. In the end, being decisive is about taking responsibility for your life.

In summary, the 10 Core Values of “Life’s Journey in Each of Us” represent the essential ingredients of one’s journey.

1. Life is a journey, not a destination. Meaning, growth, and fulfillment are found in how we live, not in titles, wealth, or outcomes. Life is not about perfection. It is about direction.
2. Struggle is not a setback; it is a teacher. It’s not an interruption of life’s journey. It’s an irreplaceable, central part of the journey itself. The struggles of life do not come to destroy us – it is an essential part of growth and development. They come to reveal us, even though the purpose may not be clear at the time.
3. Adversity, rejection, and failure are essential forces that shape character, resilience, and leadership. The best of the best actually get rejected more because they put themselves out there more.
4. Success is defined by purpose, not achievement. True success comes from

knowing why you exist and living in alignment with that purpose. Failure is not the opposite of success – it's part of the path that leads to success. Death is not the enemy – a life unlived is.

5. Leadership is character, not position. Anyone can lead through integrity, empathy, courage, and example, regardless of title or authority.
6. Attitude is the greatest multiplier of success. Ability and effort matter, but attitude ultimately determines outcomes, relationships, and resilience. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive events.
7. Emotional intelligence is as important as intelligence. Self-awareness, empathy, and emotional control are critical to happiness, leadership, and influence. When you take time to develop your emotional intelligence, you get in touch with your authentic self.

8. Resilience is built by action, not avoidance. Confidence and strength grow when we face fear, rejection, and criticism rather than retreat from them. Growth requires ownership and choice. We may not choose our circumstances, but we always choose our response and the direction of our life.
9. Giving, mentoring, and helping others discover their potential creates the deepest fulfillment and impact. No one achieves greatness alone. Role models and mentors – especially in the early years – are critical to a successful journey. We should always study those who have achieved remarkable things.
10. Legacy is measured by impact, not recognition. What ultimately matters is who we helped, who we lifted, and how we are remembered by those we influenced. Live fully, love deeply, and let life speak for you long after you are gone.

I leave you with this.

The best way to describe the essence of this book is through an excerpt of a letter from one of the mentees of The Everest Leadership Academy: “I wanted to take a moment to tell you just how much the Academy, its teachings, and the “Life’s Journey in Each of Us” book mean to me.

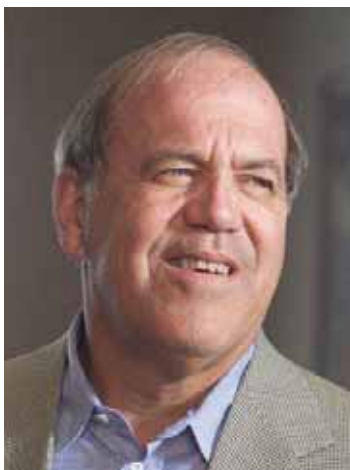
“From the very beginning, you’ve been more than just a mentor – you’ve been a guide, a supporter, and a constant source of encouragement. Your wisdom has not only helped me grow in my work but has deeply influenced the way I think, lead, and live. You’ve shown me what it means to pursue excellence with humility and to face challenges with both courage and grace.

“What I appreciate most is that you never just gave me answers, you taught me how to find them. You believed in me even when I doubted myself in my personal and professional life – and that belief has made all the difference. Your patience, insight, and

kindness have left an imprint on my heart that I will carry for the rest of my life.

“Please know that your guidance continues to flow through everything I do. Every success I achieve, every confident step I take, carries a part of your influence. For that, I am endlessly grateful.

“Thank you and the Academy for being not only a mentor, but a true inspiration. I am so fortunate to have had the privilege of learning from you and the Academy.”



About the author

Raymond Sozzi, Sr. is the founder of The Everest Leadership Academy. Previously, he was a business entrepreneur with a 30-year career in the computer industry, where he held the CEO role for eight different high-tech, venture-backed computer companies and orchestrated

several successful turnarounds. In 1999, Sozzi joined a growth private-equity and venture-capital firm as an executive-in-residence. In this role Sozzi acted as a confidant and advisor to founders and first-time CEOs.

Sozzi earned a BBA from Iona University and an MBA, from Pace University, as well as his CPA license in New York State. He also has served on many public and private company boards of directors and is a member of the Association for Corporate Growth. He published four books: "My Life's Journey as a CEO and Mentor," "The Leader in Each of Us," "Life's Journey in Each of Us," and "The CEO Handbook." He is also the author of "Leadership: The Essence of Being a Mentor" which was published in *Leader-to-Leader*, a quarterly journal.

