

OVERVIEW

- A husband & wife decide to end their marriage after many years together. They do so with respect & dignity, honoring their relationship and their children. Though difficult, the family loves and supports each other throughout. This family is creating a legacy.
- A woman holds her newborn grandchild to her chest, allowing the beating of their two hearts to dance together in celebratory introduction. The grandmother speaks out to the universe in a reverent promise to love and support the baby in every way she can. This woman is creating a legacy.
- A man sees a need in the community for deeper connection and caring, in order to create a future of hope. Though not an expert, he uses his passion to write a book and to talk to gatherings of all sizes inviting healing, camaraderie and union to occur. This man is creating a legacy.
- A woman, in a long-term difficult marriage, cares for her ailing, aged husband 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. She lays down her life for the life of another. This woman is creating a legacy.
- A mother, whose child has had major difficulties fitting into the education system, uses her frustration and passion for learning to create a quality high school in four months. She enlists the support and expertise of other parents, educators and community resources to do so. This woman is creating a legacy.
- A woman, who owns a successful consulting business, uncovers her life-long desire to share her inspirational writing with others. She gets support and in three months has her work published for a greater number of people to experience. This woman is creating a legacy.

What do each of these stories have in common? Each one uncovers a need, a desire, a wish, that comes from deep within, and through guidance (both internal & external) comes up with a plan, does the work and creates something of lasting value. It is through daily living, moment to moment choices, and a commitment to something greater than themselves that they leave the world better off than they found it. Each one creates a legacy.

I have chosen the area of life coaching called Legacy Creation as the focus of my thesis. The word *legacy* comes from the Latin word *heir* and means “something passed down from preceding generations; a gift.” It is my purpose to demonstrate that every person, through their daily actions today is creating a legacy for the future. Life coaching is a superb means for consciously crafting that which we would like to leave behind. Legacies are not only for people whose names appear in the title of foundations or who donate large sums of money—although those are legacies that bring great value to the world. Legacies are for each of us.

There is a double benefit to consciously creating our legacies. Just as billionaire Warren Buffet decided to use his fortune to do good works while still alive and is experiencing the results *during* his lifetime, there are also lasting benefits that will occur long *after* he is gone from this earth. The grandmother who commits to love and support her newborn grandchild experiences a loving relationship and makes an indelible mark on the child's life and her own and ultimately creates a legacy of love that will carry on long after she is gone. She leaves behind a legacy of love and Mr. Buffet leaves behind a legacy of hope. Both benefit individually and contribute to the greater good.

The legacy that we create is born out of the need to make a difference, to create change, to improve upon. Therefore, challenges and inner longing are not detrimental at all, but hold great value as the keys to discovering what we are being called to do or be in the world: Legacy Creation supports this. This specialized coaching assists individuals in sorting it all out--creating awareness, reflection, and clarity of purpose. It then goes on to facilitate the development and execution of a meaningful plan of action and accountability for clients. The result is that the coaching client explores what may seem like a problem, gains clarity, becomes aware of how to proceed, and is held accountable by the coach along the way. Ultimately the client uncovers clues about who they are in the world, they live their lives with more meaning and purpose, and experience the sweetness that fulfilled living brings. After all, the age old questions, "who am I and why am I here?" still long to be answered.

I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear of falling
Or of catching fire
I choose to inhabit my days
To allow my living to open me
Making me less afraid
More accessible
To loosen my heart
So that it becomes a wing, a torch, a promise
I choose to risk my significance.
To live so that that which comes to me as seed
Goes to the next as blossom
And that which comes to me as blossom
Goes on as fruit.

Dawna Markova

THESIS STATEMENT

BECAUSE LEGACY CREATION COACHING INSPIRES CLIENTS TO LIVE THEIR LEGACY EVERY DAY, THEY LIVE LIVES OF MEANING, PURPOSE AND JOY THAT ELEVATES HUMANKIND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

My mother reads the obituary column of *The Baltimore Sun* every morning. When she told me this during one of our late night long distance calls that we love to have, I said out loud, “Really?” and thought quietly, “how macabre.” She went on to tell me what causes her to perform this morning ritual; it is because she is fascinated with people’s lives and the things they do during the years that they have on earth. It inspires her. My mother told me the story of the man who had many children, worked hard at the same job his entire work life, had a second job to make ends meet and still took time to volunteer for several meaningful causes in his community. There are the stories of those who rose above major challenges to make a difference in the world and those who lived quiet, loving lives of service to their family, loved ones and friends. Then there were the folks whose lives may seem unremarkable to the outside world but whose very existence made extraordinary impact. Life stories are told in a few sentences, a paragraph or a whole column that sum up a lifetime in the obituaries of the famous, the ordinary, and everyone in between. I think my mother is on to something.

The expression, “dash between the dates,” is catching on like wildfire. It describes the hyphen between the date of birth and death on a person’s tombstone and signifies everything that happened in between. *We create our legacies in what this hyphen represents.* Perhaps we could consider placing the three dots (...), called an “ellipsis,” after the date of one’s death to represent what happens *after* we leave the planet. It is the commitment of the Life Coach to inspire and remind that each of us is powerfully positioned because we are constantly at choice point as to how we will live out our lives. Legacy Creation Coaching supports us in living in the conscious awareness that what we do each day creates the dash between the dates and has the potential to give our lives and the lives of others more meaning and greater joy, now and into the future. This changes the world for the better. My intended outcome is to prove that living our legacy has the power to transform the world.

A [person] has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he [she] plants shade trees under which he [she] knows full well he [she] will never sit.
-- Elton Trueblood (1900-1994)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COACHING COMMUNITY

Some of the benefits of coaching are experienced as coaches inspire their clients to do and see things in crisp autumn light, turning things on their sides and using language in sometimes astonishing ways. For example, using the word “presence” as a verb causes clients to be more present. When a coach asks a client, “How can you presence this new step you have taken?” the coach is asking, in a very unique way, “How can you be present with, and bring attention to, this new step?” And when coaches create awareness of how clients use language to describe their lives and goals, it becomes a powerful tool in the client’s movement forward. Using the word “delicious” with the word “conversations,” as Ruth Godfrey and I chose to do for the title of our upcoming book, is another example of the innovative use of language as an invitation to think of things in a new way. My choice to use “legacy” is for the same reason.

Legacy Creation Coaching is a specialty in the coaching community because it focuses on a particular way that clients can identify their life purpose, based on a desire for change and improvement, integrate it, act on it and make better lives for themselves and others. The concept of creating a legacy surprises people. When I hand out my newly designed business card, the reaction is always the same. What is “legacy creation” they ask and when I tell them it is an invitation to look at their lives through a wider lens, stating that each of us is creating the future by what we do today, it causes them to take pause and to think about life in a fresh, new way.

As more and more Life Coaches are trained and form specialties in the world of coaching, it expands opportunities for the entire profession. Potential clients can choose a coach who aligns with what he/she is trying to achieve. It is proven that coaches who have a particular specialty or niche are more successful than those who don’t. My exploration and decision to focus on Legacy Creation is for the purpose of increasing the number of people who can live richer lives by working with clients who desire to help others or make a difference in the world. As valuable as it is to coach a client one on one, it is part of the fulfillment of my high dream and life purpose that “all people live heaven on earth” by coaching those who desire to impact the lives of many. I achieve this by coaching ministers, “movers and shakers,” authors, politicians, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, educators, other coaches, health and well-being professionals, community organizers and other inspirational leaders. That becomes *my* legacy.

You are what your deep driving desire is; As your deep driving desire is, so is your will; As your will is so is your deed; As your deed is so is your destiny.

The Upanishads

LITERATURE REVIEW

Articles

1. “The Power of Philanthropy” by Bethany McLean. Publication date: September 2006, *Fortune Magazine*.

Key Points:

- No money is needed to start a foundation. All that is required is a focus and support for the cause. This allows anyone with a desire to spearhead a project a process to do it. Most people are under the impression that millions of dollars are needed.
- Philanthropy can achieve solutions to problems around the world more quickly and efficiently than governmental agencies in most cases.

My feelings and initial thoughts:

- The article gave me a sense of hope and a direction for clients who desire to make change in a big way, but think that they have to have a huge capital investment to do so.
- I learned that solutions can happen quickly. Once a need is determined, the support can follow.

Support for my area of specialty:

- Anyone who wants to make a difference can, regardless of income or assets. I can coach them through the process with confidence that they can make a difference, thereby creating their legacy.

2. “Giving While Living Creates Legacy Today” by Karin Grablin. Publication date: September 2006, *Personal Finance*.

Key Points:

- Warren Buffet’s decision to donate much of his \$40 billion Berkshire Hathaway fortune to five foundations is unusual not only for its size, but its strategy. He created a critical mass of assets to solve problems faster.
- There were potential tax advantages realized, but he also set an example for others to see the good you can do while you’re still alive.

My feelings and initial thoughts:

- I felt proud of Mr. Buffet for doing this; it seemed as though he was operating out of a sense of inner guidance. He is able to see his legacy in action.
- It seemed to be a call to others with resources to take the same kind of action. This made me feel as though more people could receive assistance

faster that may, in some cases, mean the difference between life and death.

Support for my area of specialty:

- This article gave me some specific information to share with clients about what they need to research in regard to income, tax implications and choosing a charity to support.
 - I was also reminded that charity is not all about money. A giving strategy can be about time and expertise, which may enable my clients to make a difference in the world, create a legacy of their own without having to donate money at all.
3. “Student Creates Legacy” by Dr. Axel Meisen, President of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Publication date: August 2006, *President’s Report*.

Key Points:

- One person can make a huge difference. In this case, it was a college student who launched a chapter of Engineers Without Borders.
- Engineers Without Borders uses technology to save lives.

My feelings and initial thoughts:

- I was reminded that people of all ages are equipped to make a difference in the world.
- Before reading this article, I did not make a connection between technology and saving lives in developing countries. Engineers Without Borders - USA (EWB-USA) is a non-profit humanitarian organization established to partner with developing communities worldwide in order to improve their quality of life. This partnership involves the implementation of sustainable engineering projects, while involving and training internationally responsible engineers and engineering students.

Support for my area of specialty:

- I could offer my coaching services to people who work with college age students (and possibly high school) to teach them how to inspire this kind of volunteerism.
 - Legacies are created at all stages of life, even though younger people may not think of it in those terms. This expands the pool of people I can coach.
4. “Force For Change” by Marc Benioff. Publication date: September 2006, *Fortune Magazine*.

Key Points:

- Philanthropy is about more than writing a check. Shortly after they started Salesforce.com in 1999, they launched the Salesforce Foundation with 1%

of the company's stock. As chief executive, Marc made a commitment to donate 1% of company profits to the community (through product donations) and 1% of employee working hours to community service.

- The 1-1-1 model - equity, profits, and employee time - ensured that as their business grew, so would their contribution to the community. By leveraging the energy of their system, they have been able to make contributions that have exceeded expectations.
- This new kind of philanthropy works hard to reflect a company's values.

My feelings and initial thoughts:

- It struck me that this kind of philanthropy, which Benioff calls “integrated philanthropy,” tied directly to the company's mission and vision statement, felt more organic and meaningful.
- Some companies make their employees donate to causes picked for them, without regard for what might have significance to the employee.
- I was impressed by the fact that 85% of Salesforce.com's employees are active in philanthropy and that they want to do more than just make money-- they want to make a difference.

Support for my area of specialty:

- Working with companies like this could be a wonderful addition to my coaching practice because it aligns with my purpose to coach beyond the one I'm coaching.
- There is an untapped market that may not know that this kind of philanthropy exists—and how it may improve their bottom line.

At the conclusion of reviewing these articles, I felt that I still needed articles about individuals who are creating legacies. The emphasis to this point seemed to rely too heavily on philanthropists and businesses. So I expanded my search and found several other articles which focused on many other forms of legacy building. Among them were, “Finding and Seeking” by Jerry Adler which starts off with this paragraph, “Born in affluence, the baby-boomers were driven to ask Big Questions about fulfillment and the meaning of life. How their legacy has changed us.” The article illustrates the spiritual longing that leads people to live with greater meaning, a sense of service and the desire to make the world a better place. Another article called “Local Legacies” detailed a project which included more than three fourths of Congress and 4,000 Americans. It focused on documenting and celebrating the richness of the culture, crafts and creativity of our country. In essence, it was an honoring of the legacies left behind by Americans throughout our nation's history. The repeating theme in all of the articles that I found was that legacies are created every day by all kinds of people.

THE INTERVIEWS

Interview Questions:

1. What problem or situation prompted you to explore options outside of what was already in existence?
2. What research did you do?
3. How did you attract others to support what you were doing?
4. What obstacles did you encounter and what did you do about them?
5. What is the "so-what" of what you are doing?
6. How does what you are doing impact:
 - You?
 - Your family?
 - Your community?
 - The world?
7. What is your intended outcome?
8. What legacy does this create?

The criterion that I felt was important in regard to who I selected to interview was:

1. They identified a need.
2. They got clear.
3. They created a plan.
4. They enlisted help.
5. They followed through.
6. They met the need.

EXPERTS IN LEGACY CREATION

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This process affected me deeply and profoundly. I was amazed to experience the sense of service to humanity that arose out of each interview. The common thread for each was an inner desire that seemed to bubble up from deep within, or in some cases, pure frustration. Collecting the information from the interviewees helped *them* to gain clarity about what they had achieved. In most cases, they had run forward like marathon runners; some had conditioned themselves for the race, some had not. It was as though I had met them at a particular checkpoint along the way in the race and they were happy to have a cup of cool water to quench their thirst. The interview process for them appeared to be a way to take a breath to look at where they had run from and were then invigorated to continue on.

One interviewee, a woman whose son had had major difficulties fitting into traditional educational systems, was incessantly driven to *create* a new high school...in a matter of four months. She said it was, “a lack of meaningful education in a holistic environment” that was missing and since she couldn’t find one, she created one. This mother’s frustration about the situation and passion for education for her own son – and other students -- were her “trainers” in this race. And her legacy was born.

Then there was the concerned citizen, who saw a “lack of civil discourse” in our country, and decided to do something about it. Though not an expert, he read, talked and gathered people together who felt the same as he did. The questions that they all seemed to be answering together were, “Why is this lack of civil dialogue happening and what is it doing to us?” He wrote a book, is developing a workbook, and facilitates community talks to create a new kind of dialogue. When I asked him what legacy he thought he was creating, he hesitated, and finally said, “That I was here, and that I made a bit of a difference.”

At the end of each interview, I asked them what they felt about the questions and their answers, and they responded in the same way. It was a breath, a sigh, an aha—almost amazed at what they had accomplished. Each was deeply moved to have had the experience of telling their story. It gave them a sense of reflection and perspective. It usually included an astounded, “Wow!” or “Whew!” or “I can’t believe what I did!”

In each case, there were obstacles to overcome, missing pieces, frustration, and a little fear. Yet something greater kept them going. It was as though each one had seen a need, did what they needed and wanted to do and then ran ahead, as if guided by an invisible force. And indeed, they were guided—by their high dream or at least a current manifestation of it. They were creating and living their legacies each day, without really being aware of it. This interview process was a gift for each of them because it created an awareness of what they had accomplished to this point and it honored their contribution. It certainly was gift for me because I got to hear their stories.

There were many gifts in this process, among them learning that none of these people were experts in the areas where they ended up making a difference. It told me that I don't need to be an expert, but simply be passionate about what it is I am doing. Ultimately, with a sense of awareness, honoring, and celebration, we all become experts at our own living. Another blessing was that I became a witness to the greatness that lies within each of us.

THE REST OF THE STORY

BECAUSE LEGACY CREATION COACHING INSPIRES CLIENTS TO LIVE THEIR LEGACY EVERY DAY, THEY LIVE LIVES OF MEANING, PURPOSE AND JOY THAT ELEVATES HUMANKIND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

Prediction: The field of Legacy Creation expands and I am an expert.

My Intention: I commit to use the information, knowledge and perspective I have gained during this process to coach those who impact the lives of many.

Impact: More people serve in greater ways. My clients have a true partner in living their legacies. This becomes my legacy.

It is now the year 2012, a year that holds a degree of mystery because it is the end of the Mayan calendar. I believe the year is significant because it holds the possibility of a new beginning. As we enter into this new phase of humanity, I have been a Legacy Creation Coach for six years now and have seen a tremendous growth in the number of people who have consciously chosen to live their legacies: ministers, “movers and shakers,” authors, politicians, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, educators, other coaches, health and well-being professionals, community organizers and other inspirational leaders have taken service to a higher level. It is a magical time of unity, partnership, love and peace. Legacy is well understood and embraced because it holds a key to deepened relationships, equality, and human evolution.

The concept of Legacy Creation is a part of the public psyche and is understood to be a part of the fabric of how we interact with one another and support each other’s high dreams. We are woven together by the power of our legacies. All is well.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am filled with a sense of profound gratitude for you, Ruth Godfrey. Your work in sharing the wisdom of Life Coaching is indeed your legacy and positively affects the lives of many times many. You and your work have changed my life in astounding ways.

Thank you, Jennie Antolak, for your steady, bright contributions to the world of coaching. I am honored to experience your legacy.

Gratitude to my fellow Master Life Coaches who have meandered along this amazing path with me. You have inspired me, taught me, made me grow and loved me. You are Legacy Creation in action.

I say thank you to my amazing family. Your support, caring, inspiration, love and belief in me are gifts that I cherish and hold in the deepest chambers of my heart.

*My husband--Robert, thank you for always believing in me, loving me, and for valuing the magical parts of my being. I am filled with excitement as I watch **your** legacy unfold.*

My firstborn daughter--Lauren, thank you for teaching me how to create a legacy before I even knew what one was or before the phrase gelled in my mind. You bless my life by your being.

My dear daughter—Lindsay, thank you for the countless little and big ways you grace the world with your presence. You inspire me.

My mother—Vicky, thank you for your constant love and support in all areas of my life.

Thank you to all who are and have been a part of my living legacy of love and hope. I am humbled and grateful beyond words.

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