



## **THE 12 ABSOLUTES OF LEADERSHIP**

**Gary Burnison (Severns notes)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**\*Leadership is the 8<sup>th</sup> wonder of the world....better seen and felt than defined and said.**

**\*The responsibilities of leadership are “all in, all the time”.**

**\*Never personalize what is happening around you or to you.**

### **Links Diagram**

**\*Being a leader is not about a title, salary or privilege. It is being responsible to, and for others.**

**\*The Journey to Leading starts with 6 ELEMENTS of the framework:  
purpose, strategy, people, measure, empower, and reward**

**\*5 LINKS in which the Leader must be constantly engaged:  
anticipate, navigate, communicate, listen and learn.**

**\*Leadership is much more ART than SCIENCE.**

**\*During good times, you will get more credit than you deserve, and during difficult times, you will shoulder most of the blame and burden.**

**\*Don't take it personally.**

**\*At the heart of it, Leadership is how YOU MAKE OTHERS FEEL.**

### **1. LEAD**

**“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail” .....Ralph Waldo Emerson**

- \*Leading is less about analytics and decisions and more about aligning, motivating and empowering others.**
- \*Being a Leader, being the CEO or Head Coach is not just a position; it's a lifestyle choice.**
- \*Authenticity will always trump Charisma. The best source of authenticity is belief-that is your own belief in the organization's mission.**
- \*I am the message-not only in words, but in demeanor, mannerisms, decision, behavior and actions.**

### **Anchor Yourself in Humility**

- \*You must have confidence in your own ability.**
- \*More importantly, in your team.**
- \*Never cross the line into cockiness.**
- With humility, the future is not guaranteed.**
- \*Leaders do not compete with anyone else, whether it's your predecessor, a peer, or a role model. You have to play your own game.**
- \*It's like GOLF....focus has to be 100% on the next shot, not 3 or 4 shots down the course.**
- \*Yes, leadership is hard work-being the first one in and last one out....going to bed a waking up caring about the organization and its employees.**
- \*It's also behind the scenes that consumes your emotional energy.**
- \*Leaders are MIRRORS for their organization.**

**"It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership" .....Nelson Mandela**

- \*Balance heroics with humility.**
- \*Humility is the grace that constantly whispers, "This is not about you."**
- \*If it is done with sincerity, leadership should be humbling. Your leadership will shine the spotlight on others and what they achieve.**
- \*Leadership is a privilege and a responsibility, not an automatic right. Others must stand on your shoulders.**

### **For the Leader, There's No Such Thing as Having a Bad Day**

- \*Notice that people around you read you like tea leaves.**
- \*People will ask you "Are you OK?" The constantly judge how you are saying things.**
- \*How are you saying it?**
- \*Do away with too many Power Points.**
- \*You cannot allow your gray days to show.**
- \*Your team needs to know that "We're going to get there," and that a game plan exists.**

**“Lead, follow, or get out of the way.” .....Thomas Paine**

- \*To lead is to give, not receive.**
- \*Seek commonalities among people, not differences.**
- \*Immediately redirect conflict into positive action.**

### **It’s Lonely at the Top, But Don’t Make it Isolating**

- \*You are the one in charge; it’s all on your shoulders.**
- \*The danger is that you can become insulated-even isolated.**
- \*It’s easy to get sidetracked by media, special interest groups, and critics.**
- \*Keep laser focus on those that matter most-employees, customers and PLAYERS.**
- \*When you speak, be measured....your words will be taken literally.**
- \*These words are now the voice of the organization.**
- \* Responsibility is much more “it happened on my watch.” It is modeling behavior for the organization....so called walk the talk.**
- “Being Prime Minister is a lonely job.....You cannot lead from the crowd.” .....Margaret Thatcher**

### **Leadership Is Rising above the “Me” to Embrace “We”**

- \*Earn trust, but expect loyalty. Respect among team members is nonnegotiable.**
- \*Words motivate, actions inspire. Model behavior that you expect your team to adopt.**
- \*Never look the other way.**
- \*Your road is the “High Road” ....Always, no exceptions.**
- \*Don’t get too comfortable. The job-as in YOUR JOB-can be taken away easily.**

## **2. PURPOSE**

**“Success demands singleness of purpose.” .....Vince Lombardi**

- \*Leadership begins with a purpose.....it is the WHY of an organization.**
- \*Vision is the “WHAT.”**
- \*If employees have a strong sense of purpose, they will act more in concert, and not go off track.**

**“The purpose of life is a life of purpose.” .....Robert Byrne**

### **Purpose is the Soul of an Organization**

- \*Purpose extends far beyond making money.**

**\*Companies are in the business of making money, to say otherwise is ludicrous.**

**\*Just as people long for meaning, so do organizations.**

**“To make all athletes better through passion, science, and the relentless pursuit of innovation.” .....Under Armour**

**“To educate its students and cultivate their capacity for life-long learning, to foster independent and original research, and to bring the benefits of discovery to the world.” .....Johns Hopkins University**

**“To connect the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful.” .....LinkedIn.com**

### **Purpose Illuminates the Horizon**

**\*Purpose is the bigger picture.**

**\*With purpose, individual members of the team come together.**

**\*Purpose captures people’s hearts and minds.**

**“To forget one’s purpose is the commonest form of stupidity.” .....Nietzsche**

**\*With shared purpose people pull in the same direction, changing “me” to “we.”**

**\*Purpose is the bridge from “what we’ve been” to “what we want to be.”**

### **Purpose Begins with the Leader but It Is Never about the Leader**

**\*Purpose has nothing to do with you, your ego or your accomplishments.**

**\*People need to look into your eyes and see the truth of that purpose.**

**“The biggest thing about leadership is people have to be themselves. Everybody has strengths and weaknesses. You have got to be true to yourself. You can’t way you want to pattern yourself after someone else. Everyone has his or her own unique style. The minute you deviate from that, you’re perceived as a PHONY. So its’ important to figure out what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are, and augment those weaknesses as best you can with people who have strengths in those areas. To me, leadership is being honest with yourself.” .....William Clay Ford, Jr., Ford Motor Company**

**\*Tough guys like Bill Belichick or Vince Lombardi.**

**\*Cerebral types like Tom Landry or Tony Dungy.**

**\*Fiery guys like Rex Ryan or Mike Ditka.**

**\*Embody purpose. People will watch and follow your lead.**

- \*Personally shape and continually deliver the message about purpose.**
- \*Walk the talk of purpose in everything you do.**
- \*Be grounded in purpose over time, continuing to examine it.**

### **3. STRATEGY**

**“I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.” .....Thomas Jefferson**

- \*Your job is to get the answer right. WHAT is right is more important than WHO is right.**
- \*The obvious of strategy is laying out a road map-how o get from here to there.**

#### **STRATEGY IS THE HOW**

- \*Strategy does not belong to the leader alone-it is shared.**
- \*Focus on the “HOW”, not the “HOW TO.”**
- \*Remember that 90% of strategy is execution.**
- \*Sweat the SMALL STUFF and anticipate the BIG STUFF.**

#### **STRATEGY IS THE WHEN**

- \*Strategy needs reality checks.**
- \*Measure where you are at all times. (20 Game Reviews)**
- \*Be resolute, give strategy time to work, but don't be stubborn.**

#### **STRATEGY IS EXECUTION**

**“Ideas are easy. It is the execution of ideas that really separates the sheep from the goats.” .....Sue Grafton**

- \*Establish and uphold the strategies of the team.**
- \*Find the new “How.”**
- \*Don't just talk about values-EMBODY them.**
- \*Strategy is making a calculated BET.**
- \*Execution requires clarity about what must happen at the intersection of HOW and WHEN.**

### **4. PEOPLE**

**“He who get the best players, usually wins.” .....Bobby Bowden**

- \*Over time your results will be only as good as the people on your team.**
- \*Rather a simple collection of stars, your team must become a mosaic of talents and abilities that work together.**
- \*To attract and retain talent, leaders of successful organizations rely on the power of engagement.**

**Guy Laliberte, Founder and CEO of Cirque du Soleil....."We are all very inspired by the performances of our artists because, at the end o the day, they are the ones who make a difference for all of us. They have no choice but to perform at a very high level because in their jobs, they have thousands of people watching them. If they don't do something perfect, someone in the audience will notice. My ultimate goal is that other people, even if they are all by themselves in an office, will think and act as if there were people watching what they are doing."**

- \*How treat and empower others will be the deciding factor.**
- \*People rarely leave careers, usually they leave jobs and bosses.**
- \*As a leader, concentrate first on developing your team.**

**"There are 3 things extremely hard, STEEL, a DIAMOND, and to KNOW ONE'S SELF." .....Ben Franklin**

#### **LEADING OTHERS MEANS FIRST LEADING YOURSELF**

- \*It's never ABOUT YOU, but it STARTS WITH YOU.**
- \*The behaviors and attitude you model.**
- \*When a leader's ego and ambition goes unchecked, his ability is severely undermined.**
- \*Napolean and meeting his Waterloo.**
- \*Underestimating the competition and overestimating your own abilities is a fatal combination.**
- \*Respect all opponents, fear none.**
- \*Instill a "SAY/DO" ration of 1 to 1-do what you say and say what you mean.**

#### **YOU MUST HAVE THE RIGHT PLAYERS**

- \*Seek a variety of backgrounds, skills, experiences, and approaches.**
- \*You do not want a team of yours.**
- \*You want a team that works together.**
- \*Choose hunger and drive over pedigree and capability.**
- \*Know that people are both creatures of habit and instruments of change.**
- \*Help your team strike the right balance between these elements.**
- \*Don't hire people for what they know, hire them for who they are.**
- \*Ingredients alone are not enough, they need the right blend, like making a cake.**

**“No Coach has ever won a game by what he knows; it’s what his players know that counts.” .....Paul Bryant**

### **To Lead is to COACH**

- \*As a leader, your job is to coach-to be a guide, to be a teacher, to be a motivator.**
- \*Your players cannot win if the information they need is in your head and not in theirs.**
- \*It’s the players who win, it’s the coaches who lose.**
- \*Just like great coaches, true leaders are not just interested in winning.**
- \*It’s not the prize, it’s getting there through the efforts of the entire team.**
- \*When a player is in the wrong position, make the change right away. Do not prolong the inevitable.**
- \*“One more chance” is often one too many. Making a change quickly is usually best for all involved.**

**“Success comes from knowing that you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.” .....John Wooden**

### **5. MEASURE**

**“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” .....Winston Churchill**

- \*All companies measure. But how many of them actually do something with the data?**
- \*Effective leadership requires data, but that’s only the beginning.**
- \*More important than the results is what you do with them.**
- \*Act and React. Design and Redesign.**

**Kevin Plank, CEO of Under Armour .....starts each day with a white board....4 objectives which drive his company.....MAKING GREAT PRODUCTS....TELLING A GREAT STORY....PROVIDING GREAT SERVICE TO CLIENTS.....BUILDING A GREAT TEAM.....Each day he maps out what he needs to do and what he has done to further each of those goals.**

- \*Makes sure he listens more than he talks.**
- \*If you aren’t measuring you are just practicing.**
- \*Operating without relevant measuring and feedback is like driving in new territory without a map.**
- \*You have to put yourself under a microscope for others to view.**
- \*Formally and informally, ask for and accept feedback from others.**
- \*Whether you are winning or losing, learn from the results.**
- \*Let others judge the results, you discern the implications of the results.**

## Lead By Walking Around

- \*Leadership is making people want to follow you.**
- \*Leadership is not found behind a desk. It's found among the people.**
- \*Talk to those who matter the most-employees and customers.**
- \*Listen more than you talk. Act on what you hear.**
- \*If you say you have an "Open Door Policy", Leave Your Door Open....**
- \*Don't question. Ask questions.**
- \*Never confuse measurements with date. The facts and figures are where the process begins. The true value-added is in knowing what those results mean.**

## 6. EMPOWER

**"As we look ahead.....leaders will be those who empower others." .....Bill Gates**

- \*Empowerment...cannot be dispensed like some magic pill.**
- \*People must empower themselves.**
- \*As the Leader, your job is to inspire them to do so.**
- \*Peter Guber....Movie Producer, Color Purple, Midnight Express, Batman, Flashdance, Rain Man, The Kids Are Allright.....3 Billion \$ worldwide.**
  - a. When a leader can find a way to emotionalize his message, then people feel that he is talking to them.**
  - b. Own the message emotionally, so you can play it forward.**
  - c. Story is far more important than recitation of facts and data points.**
  - d. Leadership is storytelling in a way that becomes memorable and actionable.**

### 2 EVENTS BRING HOME THIS POINT

- 1. 2011 Royal Wedding.....2 billion people, 1/3 of earth's people, watched it...**
  - 2. Killing of Osama bin Laden.....rallying cry for freedom**
- What made these memorable is not just what happened, but how they made people feel.**

- \*Leader must find a way to tap into emotion to forge a connection.**
- \*A story that touches people's hearts packs an emotional punch that enables them to grasp at what is possible.**
- \*That is the essence of Empowerment.**

### Not Power-EMPOWER

- \*You can't just say "people are our most valuable resource-show it.**



- \*Know you people's goals and plans.**
- \*Make THEIR career development YOUR priority.**
- \*True leaders do not worry about undermining their authority when others become empowered.**
- \*The care most about enabling others and making the team successful.**
- \*When was the first time you felt empowered**
  - a. tying shoes
  - b. learning to ride a bike
- \*When people feel empowered to do more, they will become more.**

**"Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out." .....Ronald Reagan**

- \*A team of "Yes People" isn't a team, it's a dictatorship.**
- \*Don't confuse difference of opinion with disloyalty. Empowered people should speak their minds.**

### **Delegate Responsibility, Not Accountability**

- \*You own the mistakes ; empower the team to own the victories.**
- \*Check in and stay connected, but don't check on.**
- \*Leadership business is not the "Gotcha" business.**

### **Inspiration Is in the Stories You Tell**

- \*Do you show endless PowerPoint slides with pie charts and bar graphs?**
- \*Or do you tell stories that really matter, infused with emotion that uplifts and inspires people?**
- \*PowerPoints never touched anyone's heart; pie charts can't evoke emotions.**
- \*Eloquence can never overcome a lack of authenticity.**

### **Make Other's Needs Your Personal Calling**

**Peter Gruber....."People need to see that you are all in the same boat. They want to know the leader has some skin in the game. If they think you are not interested, then you are not interesting to them-and they won't listen to you.**

**"The Mind is Everything. What you Think, you become." .....Buddha**

- \*Give of yourself: Time, Talent, Experience, and Wisdom.**
- \*Never be too busy for someone. A great leader is most concerned with the least of all.**
- \*Do your good works in private, never calling attention to yourself. Otherwise people will question your sincerity.**

## 7. REWARD

**"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." .....Maya Angelou**

**\*Money is ephemeral-and it certainly cannot buy everlasting loyalty, though it may be able to rent it temporarily.**

**\*Reward and celebrate the incremental achievements, not just the final results.**

**\*When the leader communicates "You are appreciated," "You are important," and "Your contribution makes a difference," what he really is saying to each contributor is, "You are loved."**

**\*You can never say "good job", "thank you", and "I believe in you" too often.**

**\*If you know people thrive when you pay attention, then you must notice them-consistently and genuinely.**

**\*To lead means to be in charge of the "care and feeding" of those who follow.**

**\*Care and feed is more about the soul than the wallet.**

**\*You must win the hearts and minds, not buy pocketbooks.**

**\*Your ATTITUDE is the organization's ALTITUDE.**

**"I don't care too much for money. Money can't buy me love." .....Lennon/McCartney**

**Great Story.....**

**Charles Plumb was a U.S. Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 74 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a Communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on the lessons he learned from that experience.**

**One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"**

**"How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.**

**"I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!"**

**Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."**

**Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. He says he kept wondering what he had looked in a Navy uniform: white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. He wondered how many times he might have seen him and not even said, "Good morning, how are you?" or anything else because Plumb was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor. Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the**

shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, each time holding in his hands the fate of someone he didn't know.

Now, Plumb asks his audiences, "WHO'S PACKING YOUR PARACHUTE?"

## 8. ANTICIPATE

**"It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan." .....Eleanor Roosevelt**

**\*It really starts with how you view reality.**

**\*The Leader's job is to get people to look at the present and not read the tea leaves.**

**\*Then get everyone to start considering the question: based on what we know, what are the consequences for us?"**

**\*The skill of anticipating is critical to Leadership.**

**\*It is essential at every level, not just for the Leader.**

**A small unit of U.S. soldiers marched into Naif, a city that houses Iraq's holiest mosque, in January 2005. Soon the soldiers were surrounded by a large and threatening mob. The situation was a powder keg of tension until a young officer held his rifle high above his head and pointed the muzzle downward toward the ground. He ordered the squad to do the same. "Take a knee!" he barked, and the soldiers sank to the ground in a nonthreatening posture. The crowd quieted and then dispersed. For the young officer, the decision as to how to act in that moment was pure intuition. He anticipated.**

**\*The skill of anticipating is critical to leadership, and not just for leaders.**

**\* Leadership is chess.....think several moves ahead.**

**\*There is nothing mysterious about anticipating.....it's about paying attention to the present first-to be able to define reality. What does that mean to business leader? It means one thing: forget about the bottom line.**

**\*Change the mindset from "this is what we have always done" to "this is what we could do now."**

**\*You don't need to be the smartest person in the room, just the most intuitive.**

**\*Always consider the "What Ifs" in every scenario.**

**\*Eliminate the filters between you and the rest of the organization; stay connected to the front line.**

**\*Know whom to turn to when you need to know more.**

**\*Make anticipating a TEAM SPORT.**

## 9. NAVIGATE

**“By prevailing over all obstacles and distractions, one may unfailingly arrive at his chosen goal or destination.” .....Christopher Columbus**

**\*Have a clear sense of the bull’s eye.**

**\*Always keep eyes and ears open for the progress we are making.**

**\*The unexpected is to be expected.....plan on it. (Injuries!)**

**\*The leader is to anticipate what is coming down.**

**\*Always be prepared-forward thinking.**

**\*New England Pats. In 2008-lost Brady; played Matt Cassel...11-5 record.**

**“If one tries to navigate unknown waters, one runs the risk of shipwreck.” .....Albert Einstein**

**\*Plan a little, think a lot, always decide.**

**\*Never allow success to breed complacency.**

**“I skate to the where the puck is going to be, no where it has been.” .....Wayne Gretzky**

## Admit Mistakes

**\*There is no failure except the failure to learn from one’s mistakes.**

**\*It’s not failure, it’s called learning.**

**\*When you are a leader, failure is your responsibility.**

**\*Seek to understand, not to blame. Group problem solving is empowering; problem hiding is a recipe for disaster.**

## 10. COMMUNICATE

**“Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.” .....William Yates**

**\*Communication is the leader’s “information highway”; it flows freely in both directions and in every circumstance- in good times, and especially in bad times.**

**\*How you say it is equally important.**

**\*Communication is where leadership lives and breathes.**

**\*As a Leader, you must inspire others through your words and actions.**

**\*The sign of a great leader is knowing what you know and knowing what you don't know.**

**Great Story.....**

**A new CEO of a large company at his first meeting in a town hall with his employees took the podium with a command-and-control style. He was going to show that there was a new sheriff in town and things were going to change. With hundreds of employees in the audience, the CEO began speaking. Suddenly, he noticed a man in the corner of the room who wasn't paying attention to him. Furthermore, the man wasn't dressed like the rest of the audience; he was in jeans and a T-shirt, with a baseball cap on sideways. Here was a perfect example, the CEO thought to himself, to show employees that such laxity was not going to be permitted.**

**"You in the corner," the CEO yelled out. "How much do you make a week?" Looking up in surprise, the guy replied that he made about \$400 a week. With a smirk, the CEO reached into his pocket and pulled out about \$1,000 in cash. "You're fired!" he said. As the man in the baseball cap came forward and took the money, the CEO noticed the funny grin on his face, but he ignored it. Some of the employees were smiling; others seemed stunned. No matter, the CEO told himself; he had made his point.**

**After his speech, the CEO called on one of his lieutenants over. "So, how do you think I did?" he asked. "I sure made an example of that guy. By the way, who was he?"**

**"That was Johnny, the pizza delivery guy. He was bringing us lunch, and he sure appreciated the tip you gave him."**

**Before you speak, know your audience.....**

- \*For the leader, there are no off the cuff remarks.**
- \*You do not speak for yourself, but rather for the whole organization.**
- \*Through your communication, you establish credibility.**
- \*Counter fear with facts and hope.**
- \*Communicate all the facts, but not until you have all the facts.**
- \*Watch your non-verbal cues so that you don't appear agitated, annoyed, or angry because of the feedback you are hearing.**
- \*Engender trust, that "what's said here stays here."**
- \*If fact, true leaders do more listening than talking.**
- \*When you take time to acknowledge an e-mail or written note from an employee, you have immediately conveyed that you care and that the other person matters.**

**“Wise men speak because they have something to say; fools because they have to say something.” .....Plato**

**\*Communication is connecting and engaging with others. Deliver the message frequently and consistently, with candor and honesty.**

**\*Actions speak louder than words is true for everyone-especially the leader.**

## **11.LISTEN**

**“We have two ears and one tongue so that we would listen more and talk less.” .....Diogenes**

**\*Listening as a leadership skill involves observing with one’s eyes and ears, picking up tone, nuance, body language, and eye contact (or lack thereof).**

**\*Listening is not just hearing the words; it’s also paying attention to the nonverbal cues to see how the person is feeling and what she might be thinking.**

**\*Listening is to hearing as speaking is to talking.**

**\*It’s not just hearing the words, but also recognizing how they’re said.**

**\*Communication is 80% listening and inquiring, and 20% speaking. The former must guide the latter.**

**\*Don’t simply hear, listen**

**\*Stay focused. Where you eyes go, your attention follows.**

**“You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time.” .....M. Scott Peck**

**\*Humans are emotional creatures. They love to share and talk. Many people simply don’t want to stop talking.**

**“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak: courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.” .....Winston Churchill**

**\*Listen, learn, and then lead-in that order.**

**\*Listen to create a culture of candor.**

**\*Listen to what you don’t want to hear. Feedback that is critical or negative is the gift that leaders don’t receive enough.**

**\*Don’t close your door (literally), if say you have an open door policy.**

**\*Listen to those who are closest to the front lines.**

**\*Listen without judgment.**

## 12.LEARN

**“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” .....JFK**

**\*To be an effective leader, you must have and demonstrate agility-the ability to learn from experience and to apply that learning to new or first-time situations.**

**\*What you knew yesterday got you where you are today.....What you learn today determines your success tomorrow.**

**\*Leaders today must be savvy to new technology.**

**\*Knowledge is what you know, Wisdom is acknowledging what you don't know. Learning and discernment are the bridge between the two.**

**“Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.” .....Confucius**

**\*Leaders are the builders of confidence. Therefore, you don't have the luxury of shrugging your shoulders and saying you don't know. As a leader, you will not have all the answers, but you must know where to find the quickly by surrounding yourself with diversity in thought.**

**\*No matter how high you rise, or how much you accomplish, be a continuous learner.**

**\*The day you stop learning is the day you start dying.**

**Great story to end the book.....**

**One day a farmer's donkey fell into a well. The farmer frantically thought about what he could do as the stricken animal cried out to be rescued, With no obvious solution, the farmer regretfully concluded that because the donkey was old and the well needed to be filled in anyway, he should give up the idea of rescuing the beast. Instead, he should simply fill in the well. Hopefully the poor animal would not suffer too much, he tried to persuade himself.**

**The farmer asked his neighbors for help, and before long they all began to shovel earth quickly into the well. When the donkey realized what was happening, he wailed and struggled, but to everyone's relief, the noise stopped.**

**After a while, the farmer looked down into the well and was astonished by what he saw. The donkey was still alive and was progressing toward the top of the well. He had learned that by shaking off the dirt instead of letting it cover him he could step on the accumulating soil as the level rose. When the donkey reached the top of the well, he stepped over the edge and gave the**

**farmer one last look. "Now who's the jackass?" the donkey remarked, and trotted happily away.**

**"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts." .....John Wooden**