#### THE

## HEROIC LEADERSHIP WORKBOOK

## CHRIS LOWNEY WITH JUDY WEARING





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#### WELCOME

#### TO THIS 30-DAY WORKBOOK EXPERIENCE IN HEROIC LEADERSHIP!

The Heroic Leadership Workbook is a workbook to accompany my book Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World. That book explored the early Jesuits' remarkable history and made the case that those Jesuits thrived (and still thrive) in part because of a culture that prized self-awareness, heroism, ingenuity, and love as four foundational pillars of what we know as leadership. Such leadership is heroic when it enables and empowers leaders to transcend themselves and their egos to serve missions that inspire their allegiance, excellence, and imagination.

If that book was largely about the Jesuits, this companion workbook is about you and your call to heroic leadership, whatever your stage of life, whether you are a student or a retiree, and whatever your life pursuits, whether you are managing hundreds of people or simply managing your own life. The exercises that follow will guide you through a carefully crafted, spiritual, reflective journey. You will emerge with a deeper understanding of yourself, your values, your characteristic ways of engaging colleagues, and how all of these things impact your leadership effectiveness. You will also be invited (or, put another way, challenged) to connect your deepest personal and spiritual beliefs to your everyday life and the work you do in order to cultivate a life that is wholly integrated rather than fragmented. By the end of the workbook experience, you will be able to articulate with clarity and confidence: *This is who I am. This is the leadership statement I will make with my life. This is what I will change. And this is what I will do more often.* 

Thanks for joining me in the journey to heroic leadership.

—Chris

"We can be leaders in everything we do—in our work and in our daily lives, when teaching others or learning from others. And most of us do all those things in the course of any given day."

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS WORKBOOK EXPERIENCE

Heroic Leadership is grounded in Jesuit spirituality, most especially as it was laid out in Ignatius of Loyola's masterwork, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (see chapter 6 in *Heroic Leadership*), which is comprised of not just text to be read, but of a series of exercises to be done.

So it is with this workbook. If all you do is read through the following exercises, you will have wasted your precious time. What you get out of it will match what you put into it, and the workbook experience will bear great fruit if you invest enough reflective time to learn or clarify something about yourself from each exercise. Please work through the exercises steadily, dedicating, if possible, a bit of time each day for thirty consecutive days.

However, don't think of these exercises as if you are training for a race, where you build up stamina by going faster and faster. If anything, it's the opposite: a great mantra of Jesuit spirituality is to "pause where you find fruit." Please do just that! If one particular exercise really gets you thinking, and you want to mull it over for another day before moving to the next one, go right ahead and do so.

If a prayerful or spiritual routine is already part of your life, I strongly encourage you to bring the questions posed in these exercises to your prayer life. By doing so, you'll achieve one of this workbook's core goals: to pursue a "whole" life—that is, work and lead and live in a way that integrates your deepest spiritual and religious beliefs into your work and human interactions, and you will conquer the modern disease of "split-life-ism," where you set aside your authentic self and values every morning in order to become a different "work self" in your company or organization.

Finally, while this workbook draws faithfully from my book *Heroic Leadership*, it does not do so in a linear fashion. In other words, this workbook is not intended to be used side-by-side with the book as you read it from beginning to end. Rather, this workbook reflects a more organic rhythm, inviting you to reflect on leadership themes as they pertain to your day-to-day experience.

Readers who want to undertake these workbook exercises as part of a cohort in a university-credentialed certificate program have two wonderful opportunities to do so. See page 70 of this workbook for more information.

I wish you the very best as you go forward, and I'll be happy to hear what you learn from the workbook experience. I'm easy to find at www.chrislowney.com.

—Chris Lowney

"As I considered Ignatius Loyola and his early Jesuit colleagues, I became convinced that their approach to molding innovative, risk-taking, ambitious, flexible global thinkers worked. In some ways—dare I say—it worked better than many modern corporate efforts to do the same."

# A CALL TO HEROIC LEADERSHIP

A plethora of leadership books are churned out every year, often by sports stars or celebrity-CEOs who are implicitly pitching a promise ("Here's how you, too, can reach the pinnacle of success!"). Well, such advice may help the infinitesimal minority who are clawing their way to the top, but what about the rest of us? We're essentially marginalized in the leadership discussion, gazing up at the high and mighty.

My book *Heroic Leadership* staked out a radically different claim: namely, that every one of us has a leadership opportunity and responsibility, a calling to show leadership. Not if we someday become pope or a corporate titan, but *right now*, whether we are high school students or retirees, whether we labor in corporations, in schools, or at home.

That's not a rhetorical gimmick. Dictionary definitions highlight the pointing out of a way and the act of influencing people toward a goal as signs of leadership. Well, we're each pointing a way all the time. How we treat others, what we prioritize, and the values we model all point out a "way": our leadership statement about how humans ought to treat one another, our proclamation of what's worthy of time, effort, and sacrifice.

Trouble is, many of us have never deliberately pondered the leadership statement that our lives are making. Only by becoming more intentional can we flourish and realize our potential. And, by becoming what we can be, we'll help society become what it should be.

The following exercises crack open this idea that "everyone leads." We'll ponder our current life trajectory as leaders, and we'll consider how we might want to fine-tune that trajectory to become the best leaders we can be.

"We're all leaders, and we're leading all the time, well or poorly."