



CHIEF
EXECUTIVE
OFFICER
GARY
BURNISON



Our Timeless Truth

The circle of life—like the cycle of business—will always change. But leadership endures.

I can remember like it was yesterday, though more than 20 years have passed. My son, Jack, was five years old and had to undergo surgery. In that sterile, white prep room, the gravity of it hit when the nurse put the needle in Jack’s arm. His eyes wide, Jack turned to me and asked, “Daddy, will everything be OK?” Startled by the sheer fear I felt inside, I forced confidence into my voice. “Yes,” I told him. “It’s going to be OK.”

Flash forward several years—our roles reversed. This time, I was in the hospital bed, having herniated a disc in my back for the third time. Just before I went into surgery, Jack squeezed my arm and said those same words to me: “Dad, everything is going to be OK.”

For me, these stories have become a parable of the parallel between life and leadership. It’s a timeless truth and a message of hope—consistent from one cycle to the next, one generation to another. For today’s leaders, it’s even more relevant.

On the heels of a once-in-a-lifetime cataclysm, it just feels like something else is always coming up—economic, health, geopolitical, social.... But as leaders, we must be all-in, all the time—and all about the care of customers and the feeding of employees. We shouldn’t ditch our

better selves and give into the survivalist side of our human nature just because the economic arrows are pointing in a different direction.

Intellectually, we know business does move in cycles and leaders need to respond with decisive action—sometimes grabbing the yoke. In fact, in meetings with global colleagues and clients over the past few months, I’ve been saying that the seat-belt sign may come on.

But leadership is most definitely not cyclical. Its unwavering principles persist through both the fertile times of summer and the fallowness of winter. And in all times and every season, it’s about reassuring others that, in any environment, the path is always up and to the right.

It’s a simple leadership framework, where mindset meets the moment—and all calibrated around what to do and how to do it.

PURPOSE IS THE ANCHOR. It is the overarching “why” that casts a long shadow, changing “me” to “we.”

STRATEGY IS THE ROADMAP. It sets the course and the velocity—never moving faster than people can absorb.

PEOPLE MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. Despite the technological innovations of the past century, people are what make organizations great.

IT’S NOT POWER—IT’S EMPOWER. Enable and equip others, then get out of their way.

REWARD AND CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS—ALWAYS. We can never say “thank you” and “good job” often enough.

ANTICIPATE A FUTURE GROUNDED IN TODAY’S REALITY. The more clearly we see the here and now, the better we’ll project what is around the next bend.

NAVIGATE IN THE MOMENT. Course-correct in real time. Sometimes a decision is a good decision—until it’s no longer a good decision. It takes a mindset shift, elevating

“In all times and every season, it’s about reassuring others that, in any environment, the path is always up and to the right.”

