



# Life Leaders Journal

To inspire action so we PLAN and LEAD in LIFE  
to fulfill our callings and serve others as our best-selves.

Dr. David Dyson



## Leadership lesson from Warren Buffett:

"In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities:  
*integrity, intelligence, and energy.*  
And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you."

### **Summary Actions for Leaders and Students**

This thought-provoking idea from Mr. Buffett should make us think about putting plans and practices in place that help us attract, hire, train, reward, and retain people who match our vision and values instead of just looking at resumes and personalities during interviews. Those who make decisions only based on job descriptions, resumes, and interviews often have more frustrating "people problems" than expected. That drains time for leaders and creates conflict in the culture.

**Best-self leaders** increase their chances of good hires and good results by aligning *Plans, Assessments, and Rewards (PAR)* – and using these tools when recruiting, coaching and rewarding. Make sure what is important is known and rewarded from the start.

If your organization has a Mission, Vision, and Values statement, use this in job announcements or at least prior to interviews. Why prior? Those who do not want to live by your values may drop out. Others will be more inspired. Recruiting should be about *match vs. sell*. One CEO tried this and was excited to tell me, "we added a brief orientation for potential applicants before they applied.... We got a 10% reduction in applicants!" That meant, the 90% were more likely to want to be there and do what the organization valued. Before, some people were using resumes (their past) and personalities to get jobs without considering that they did not share some of the core values like "continuous improvement" (that requires professional development study and training, writing a plan for doing their jobs and developing themselves, serving on improvement teams...). Many organizations still wait until the end of the first year to share the performance evaluation (professors tell students what gets rewarded "day one"). Share assessments and rewards before you hire or at least in training.

For a different company, we identified on one page the mission, vision, and values, which they started using in job announcements and interviews. We supported development of the *plans, assessments, and rewards systems* during a course that included monthly lunch and learns plus behind the scenes work. With good intentions, they had been hiring some motivated to improve and some who felt "I am done with school so just let me do my 8-5." The mixed culture – some want to be and do their best, some are fine to coast – had caused conflict. They chose to seek people with "extraordinary attitude and ability." This decision and action on it over time doubled retention and revenues. Leaders help define vision and values – "we cannot be all things to all people." If you are a student seeking career opportunities, decide if you want professional and leadership development. If you do, find an organization that matches you – you will be happier and develop faster.

Many leaders talk about the importance of goals and plans periodically – without requiring or rewarding action. This is like telling a student, “this is recommended action though not part of your grading.” Most students under stress to make a grade will focus on what gets rewarded first. A wise leader-teacher identifies desired knowledge and action, plus rewards students for doing the desired action. For 10 years, I have guest-lectured with my former professor, Dr. Byron Chew, to help his students write professional mission and vision statements as well as plans for college. The first few years, Dr. Chew highly endorsed the ideas – a few did the recommended work. After he made the suggested work a class assignment that earned credit for grades, success increased from a few highly motivated students to 100% doing the assignments recommended. This shifted my role from a guest speaker to a “resource who is here to help you with your assignment.” The students demonstrate greater attitude and action. Those who use their professional mission and vision statements with their resumes will increase their chances of matching with an opportunity and building trust they have good intent, which also will help hiring leaders make good choices.

The *Next Generation of Leadership* will build on past lessons emphasizing the art of inspiring people with good listening, encouraging, and more to also include *putting systems in place to help good people do the right things automatically*. An executive, especially a founder, usually is motivated prior to retirement for help to put these systems in place to encourage people to do desired actions when he or she is no longer around day to day. A progressive leader need not wait until the year of retirement, but rather can start now to make sure the best thinking in the organization is articulated through best practices and people are rewarded for learning and doing them. Just like a professor/teacher, a leader in organizations has the opportunity and the calling to make sure that mission, vision, and values are clear. *Performance rewarded* tends to be *performance repeated*. When leaders do this and professionals/students seek to understand, time priorities tend to be more focused on desirable actions. Another benefit: conflict and frustration often reduce.

**Students and professionals** seeking career advancement, keep in mind that smart leaders like Warren Buffett are looking for people who demonstrate *integrity as well as intelligence*. A good career/professional development plan should include learning and developing character and competence to help you be your best-self. Writing a plan for professional and other areas of life increases probability of focus and internalization to do the right things instinctively. Sharing your vision with the decision-maker for an opportunity helps him or her know your intent and see your direction; that often helps build trust in your attitude and ability better and faster. Life leaders (true professionals) prepare character and competence – even before the call.

**If you want to take action**, you may call for information or consider these options:

**Year-end professional development hours** needed for licensure or internal standards often include training on *leadership and empowerment* and/or *plans* that align with the organization and drive budgets.

**Coaching** to help *individuals or teams improve plans and preparation* for the next level.

**Consulting to advise and assist** on improvement of *plans, assessments, and rewards*, plus *leadership and professional development training*.

**Assessment of attitude and ability or professional preparation** can be administered to a group anonymously with reporting to the group and to leaders to help make decisions about training, coaching, leadership, and organizational development to achieve next level commitment, confidence....

**Professionalism Under Stress** (book by Dunn and Dyson) summarizes *7 Lessons for True Professionals*, including development and *earning empowerment*. [www.ProfessionalismUnderStress.com](http://www.ProfessionalismUnderStress.com)

My calling aims at assisting people with *life leadership, professional development, and career preparation*. If you or your organization is motivated to explore improvement, I could brief you about my professional services or our free monthly public programs. -David (205)422-6484