

What 21st Century  
leaders can learn from  
16th. Century Jesuits  
(Lo que los líderes del  
siglo XXI pueden  
aprender de los  
jesuitas del siglo XVI)

**por Chris Lowney**

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I would like you to join me in considering this question by participating in a little thought experiment. Please take a moment to think of the names of two or three living leaders.....I suspect that if I polled the audience, I might hear of President xxx perhaps even George Bush?! But I wonder how many of you thought of your own name. I suspect virtually no one. Why not? The answer might have something to do with modesty, a laudable virtue: it might strike you as unseemly braggadocio to proclaim yourself a leader. Well, I'm here to suggest that the very first persons we each should consider leaders are ourselves. We live within a popular culture, transmitted through the mass media, that force feeds us a demoralizing, disempowering notion that leaders are those who are in charge—presidents, generals, bishops, CEOs and the like—leadership in this stereotypical notion is equated with having subordinates, being on television, having money, or having power and exerting it. That notion of leadership is not the solution, it's the problem.

And what do effective leaders do to motivate those around them?

Let's make this phase two of the thought experiment, and think informally of qualities, behaviors, or attitudes you would expect to find in an effective leader.....Again, if we polled the room I know we would assemble a rich list of qualities, and I have no doubt that anyone who

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\* Chris Lowney abandonó la Compañía de Jesús un viernes en 1983 y comenzó una nueva carrera el lunes siguiente en J. P. Morgan & Co. Trabajó con J. P. Morgan durante 17 años como director administrativo y miembro del comité administrativo en Nueva York, Tokio, Singapur y Londres. En la actualidad vive en Nueva York, donde es consultor de la Catholic Medical Mission Board.

embodied the traits captured in the collective wisdom of this room would lead well. Your lists probably include words like decisiveness, courage, bold decisions, sweeping change, vision, honor, and so on. But I wonder how many enunciated anything like this idea ventured by a man who himself compiled unimpeachable credentials as a leader. His simple, succinct vision: “You must love those you lead before you can be an effective leader.”

The leader I just quoted was General Eric K. Shinseki, recently retired U.S. Army Chief of Staff, the highest ranking military officer in the United States. When America’s commanding warrior retired in mid-2003, his retirement speech included that simple statement I quoted, “You must love those you lead before you can be an effective leader.”

Sentiment like that may seem a bit remarkable and even out of place among the macho, towel-snapping military class. Or is it? I suspect that a general makes wiser choices when he loves those he must place in harm’s way, and I suspect that soldiers perform more effectively when confident that they are loved and valued by those tasked with the awful burden of sending them to face possible death.

So, who is a leader...and how are leaders leading? The message I want to convey this morning is that we’re *all* leading, well or poorly, all the time, by virtue of the values that we’re role modeling. And our way of leading—our claim to leadership—is not our status or hierarchical position on an organization chart, but who we are and those values we choose to role model—like love in the case of General Shinseki, whom I just quoted.

This definition of leadership certainly may run counter to our culture stereotypes—witness the thought experiment we all participated in earlier—but such a definition is neither gimmickry, a fad, nor something I’ve made up. Consider one informal definition of being a leader that has some currency among academics working in the business arena—the Harvard Business School professor John Kotter, defines a leader as one who 1) sets out a vision of the future, 2) aligns others around that vision, and 3) helps them past the inevitable obstacles that stand in the way of attaining it. One of the dictionary definitions of leadership is quite similar, the act of pointing out a way, direction, or goal and influencing others toward it.

Everyone in this room is doing that all the time. You are pointing out a way or a direction for your friends and neighbors by how you treat those you work with or for, those you meet, how you prioritize your time, and so on—in other words, you are leading. Many of you are par-

ents: can there be any more obvious act of pointing out a way and influencing others than the leadership that you are showing with your children every day?

Though all of us are leading, many of us are doing so only 'subconsciously.' All of us have absorbed certain values...through our upbringing, our culture, our religion. You may always work hard, deliver on what you promise, treat others fairly, be considerate to strangers. But you may never have explicitly named these 'habits' as specific virtues and values that characterize your way of living and leading.. Many of you in your families and workplaces are role-modeling exactly the kind of love that General Shinseki spoke about. But you may not have called the habitual way in which you treat others 'love,' and you may not have explicitly considered this virtue part of an overall leadership project that is your life. To realize our full leadership potential, we need to get more explicit—more conscious, more purposeful—about ourselves as leaders, what kind of leaders we want to be, and how we will project that in our families, workplaces, and the other arenas in which we interact. Everything we know about researching corporate America is that one of the factors that best predicts how well people will do is simply that they know what they want to achieve—you make the strongest leadership impact when you know what impact you want to make.

In my talk I now plan to set out a leadership style based on the example of a rather unlikely company. There are many smart business people in this audience. Which of you would like to join a company like the one I will now describe:

Imagine ten smart but unfocused men who want to start a company, but seem to go about it in a rather odd way. They are ricocheting around every kind of work from retail street preaching to hospital orderly work to university-level lectures. They had no corporate name; no business plan; no capital. The one who was supposedly in charge of this start up was not only past normal retirement age, but had already outlived the average lifespan of a sixteenth-century European; he had no management experience and virtually nothing else on his resume but a good academic degree, a multiple arrest record, and a couple of jail terms.

Well, what odds would you give them of surviving?

Yet the company I just described not only survived but thrived. For I just described the Jesuits in the 1530s, as they were getting their company ready for launch. This year the Jesuits approach their 466th birthday...why that's even older than Telefonica and Cortes Ingles Today

there are roughly 20,000 Jesuits working in over 100 countries. My book calls them the company that changed the world, and that is a very easy claim to back up: you may have put the date for this event on a calendar, and the calendar you used was implemented according to the recommendation of a Jesuit. While I'm talking, children in Vietnam are in school learning to write in an alphabet that was developed by a Jesuit, and further north in Asia soldiers are patrolling a Russian-Chinese border negotiated in part by, Jesuits. On the other hand, these Jesuits also boast the unique distinction of getting themselves completely disbanded by the pope, yet somehow resurrecting themselves 40 years later. Just think of the parallels today: what if the xxx company went bankrupt tomorrow. What are the odds that in 2044 some wizened old geriatric crew of ex—ers would meet on the street and say, 'hey, let's resurrect the old band' Impossible, of course, yet somehow Jesuits pulled off exactly this feat.

How did they succeed so spectacularly, and what can we learn from them? These are the kinds of questions I wanted to explore in my book, looking at the Jesuits more from what might be called a corporate perspective than from my own experience as a Jesuit.

As you've heard, I was fortunate enough to work in Asia, Europe, and the U.S. for JP Morgan & Co. for some seventeen years. Before that I was a Jesuit seminarian for seven years. As you well know, Jesuits like all members of Catholic religious orders, take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and you can guess which of those three proved daunting enough to prompt my departure. I could put it this way: I struggled successfully to live as a celibate for seven years; since then, I've been struggling not to be a celibate. You may conclude from this that I wrote the book as a cheaper way to figure out my life than going into therapy. But in fact, what most intrigued me was not the very obvious differences in mission between the Jesuit order and an investment bank, but the underlying similarities: all human organizations, and all individuals in organizations, have to do the same things: motivate self and others, establish goals, sell ideas convincingly to others. And it struck me that these sixteenth and seventeenth century priests did these things in ways that were frequently a lot more effective than the ways we do those things today.

My punch line: that vastly more important to personal and corporate happiness and success than the plan or capital the early Jesuits so obviously lacked was what they did possess—a unique approach to life and work that looks like what we in the modern era call personal leadership.

Now let me begin to develop that Jesuit leadership style by telling a bit of a story about the Jesuits, one that very much touches your own history here in Spain.

When the ten Jesuit founders, that disorganized crowd that I was profiling earlier, were getting their company started in the 1540s, even though they had no business plan and no very clear idea of the kind of work they would do, they did have a very clear idea of the kind of person they wanted to recruit to join them. One Jesuit had his own little recruiting slogan of sorts, saying that the Jesuit company needed, *quamplurimi et quam aptissimi*, or in English, as many as possible of the very best. And the start of the Jesuit school system—including eventually your school right here in Rio—was the result of no master plan to build a global higher education empire, but almost completely an accidental outgrowth of this recruiting vision.

For in the early 1500s when the Jesuits were starting, public education was virtually unavailable; perhaps only 1% of Europeans enjoyed the great blessing that many in this room have had of achieving a higher education; you might reflect, incidentally, on how blessed you are to be born at this time in this place, where educational opportunity is so much more widespread. Even today, even in this country, we all know that there are children who have no more chance of getting themselves educated than I have of going to the moon on a rocket ship. The Jesuit founders, therefore, could not find enough recruits who were well enough educated to be ‘*aptissimi*,’ the very best. So the Jesuits opened a school or two to educate their own recruits studying to be priests; soon after, however, local towns and princes noticed that these Jesuit schools were of far higher quality than anything else available in their regions, so they asked the Jesuits to begin accepting lay students into their schools. It wasn’t long before Jesuits were opening schools not just for seminarians studying to become Jesuit priests, but also for those who would become government workers, teachers, performing artists, and business persons. Though the focus of their system changed dramatically, its core ambition did not: these were still places where the *aptissimi*—the very best—were to be molded.

And, of course, that school system succeeded in molding *aptissimi* as no other privately organized network has in human history. Jesuits administer what remains the largest privately organized system of higher education in the world. Jesuits have educated within the past generation alone, former or current presidents in the US, Mexico, Canada, Philippines, France, Japan, Peru, Nicaragua, and who knows how many

other countries. You today are living proof that this Jesuit educational model still works; the students who study here are realizing that sixteenth-century dream that if only they are given the right opportunities, guidance, and resources, talented young persons are capable of turning themselves into aptissimi.

Now what does it mean to be aptissimi? If we asked people on the street, they would tell us that to be the very best, aptissimi, means to be rich, to be famous, to have many houses, and so on. But this Jesuit vision of what it means to be aptissimi, or let's say to be a leader, is very different. As I look at the Jesuit history, their letters, and their rules, it was clear to me that Jesuits instilled such capabilities through a four-pillared vision that governed their way of working as individuals and in teams:

1. Self-awareness
2. Ingenuity
3. Heroism
4. Love

Self-awareness Leaders understand their strengths, weaknesses, values and update oneself on those daily.

Ingenuity: the ability to confidently adapt to an ever-changing world

Heroism: to remain energized by great ambitions, a passion to excel, and goals that are bigger than any one person, and finally:  
Love: Engage others with a positive attitude that recognizes their dignity and potential and seeks to develop that potential.

I'm now going to talk about heroism, self-awareness, ingenuity, and love, in that order.

## **Heroism:**

Let me now start with heroism, and let me use an anecdote to help you conceive how early-Jesuit style heroism might differ from our stereotypical understanding of what heroic means: as many of you know, the Jesuits operate today what is the world's largest privately organized, higher education network. Your country is richly represented in this wonderful network:.... But that Jesuit school system was not always the world's largest, of course, and while it was in its relative sputtering infancy in the late 1500s, one Jesuit named Pedro Ribadeneira had the temerity to write the King of Spain and call the fledgling operation something so important that, "the well being of the whole world



and all Christendom” depended on it. That’s a heroic vision if ever there was one! Yet, grounded in reality. Ribadaneira knew what it was like to teach in a school, because listen to what he said in a different context: “It is a repulsive, annoying and burdensome thing to guide and teach and try to control a crowd of young people, who are naturally so frivolous, so restless, so talkative and so unwilling to work, that even their parents cannot keep them at home.”

This Jesuit Ribadaneira, in fact, may have articulated a wonderful model of heroism relevant not only to the teaching profession but in many of our work environments: this idea of immersing oneself squarely in the mucky reality you face each day, yet not losing sight of your guiding vision and fondest hopes. We’ve grown accustomed to associating heroism with extraordinary acts like saving persons trapped in burning buildings or saving comrades in battle. This Jesuit vision is instead proposing that heroism is less about the opportunity at hand—because most of us can’t control the opportunities that life will present us: we may never have the chance to save someone in distress—than it is about the *response* to the opportunity at hand, which we can *always* control.

The teacher has no guarantee that he or she will make a profound, life-altering impact in a child’s life: his or her heroism is manifest in the commitment to live and work as if he or she *might* make such a difference, never losing sight of the fullest vision of what teaching can accomplish. Teachers also understand that the project—the school—is successful only when each individual supports a goal that is bigger than him or herself. I’m reminded in this regard of an anecdote about US President Kennedy in the early 1960s, when the US space program was trying to send a rocket ship to the moon. He had a tour of the space agency, and at the end of it met a gentleman sweeping the floors and to be polite asked him what his job was. He supposedly replied, ‘sir, I’m putting a man on the moon.’ Surely all of us have had the work experience that teams perform most effectively when individuals are able to see beyond their individual task and understand their work as participation in some cause that is greater than any one individual. Everyone knows that the teams that perform best are teams where individuals “get over themselves” and understand they are participating in some goal that is bigger than any one person.

### **Self Awareness:**

Every Jesuit in history, from the founders to the current Jesuits being formed in more than one hundred countries, with no exception in his-

tory that I'm aware of, has participated during training in a month-long intense period of personal reflection called the spiritual exercises, during which he is removed completely from the workplace, from reading papers, watching television, talking with friends, or anything that could deter from the intense introspection that becomes their only 'job responsibility' for thirty days. These guided meditations, which probably remain the most powerful retreat tool in the Christian world today, were St. Ignatius Loyola's very practical attempt to translate into a systematic approach the fruits of his own journey to religious understanding. As far as Jesuits are concerned, this is a spiritual and religious experience, but the self-assessment that is taking place makes these exercises a superb leadership bootcamp. For each Jesuit is making a considerable investment in pondering his strengths and weaknesses, his personal values, his outlook on the world.

Anyone who has managed lots of people or worked in Human Resources—I've done both— has been mystified by the phenomenon that rising stars who later crash and burn even though they had the total package of technical skills, smarts, ambition, and training; one school of thought attributes these spectacular flame-outs to lack of self-awareness: those with talent who bomb out frequently have it too easy in the beginning, and never come to grips with their values and weaknesses; those who make it in the long run are frequently those who have had to confront their weaknesses, and been learning agile enough to work on them or minimize them. The Harvard emeritus Abraham Zaleznik, who worked with a number of chief executives, once observed that many of them seemed to be individuals who were 'twice born,' where some personal crisis like injury, alcoholism, or bankruptcy forced them to come to grips as adults with who they were and what they valued and wanted: the early Jesuits are telling us that if a crisis doesn't thrust this moment of self-scrutiny upon us, we need to manufacture the process for ourselves

Jesuits also learn during this period a wonderfully modern and easy to adopt tool for daily updating: for the rest of his life after this month-long upfront investment, each Jesuit follows a daily regimen of three mental pitstops that in aggregate absorb as little as twenty minutes a day, and which anyone here could begin using tomorrow. First, 'upon waking up' remind yourself of what you have to be grateful for, and remind yourself of your goals—which might be a weakness you want to work on or an objective to achieve. Then, once in the middle of the work day and once at the end of the day, repeat a similar process: take a few minutes, remind yourself of your blessings, remind yourself of

your goals, and mentally scroll through the last few hours to extract lessons learned from your performance.

I think the genius of this simple practice is obvious when we consider its origins. Remember I mentioned that the Jesuits broke radically from existing custom by abandoning the monastic practice of gathering together in chapel multiple times daily in order instead to pursue a much more activist lifestyle. Yet, Ignatius had the incredibly modern insight that we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century typically overlook: if you and I don't have the luxury of retreating to chapel multiple times daily like monks, we need to find some other way of keeping ourselves focused and recollected as we bob along each day on a tide of e-mails, phone calls, and meetings without ever pulling back to take stock. I'm sure you've seen the fallout from this chaotic lifestyle as I have: the person who gets to the end of the day without ever getting to his or her # 1 priority, or the person who has a meeting go badly at 8:30 and remains distracted about it all day, draining productivity. These are self-awareness problems.

*Before I leave this topic of how we keep ourselves recollected in the middle of our busy days, let me share one other anecdote from Jesuit lore about staying focused: one elderly Jesuit had the job of being the doorkeeper, to receive those who came with business for the Jesuits, to deliver things, beg for money, and god knows what else. This was in addition to his work as community treasurer or whatever else he was doing, so you can imagine how easy it would be to think about the doorkeeping duty as a constant distraction and a complete pain in the neck. And the brother therefore created a little mental routine for himself, that every time there was a knock at the door he used to say to himself, "I'm coming, Lord Jesus." Now, just imagine what kind of customer service that brother was delivering!*

***[I may include some of this material....This is not simply my own opinion, but is well supported by contemporary research. The famous American college UCLA has for the last 40 years conducted a fascinating survey of the priorities of incoming college freshmen: In 1967 90% of freshmen considered it essential or very important to develop a meaningful philosophy of life; 40% considered it essential to be well-off financially. By 2003 the proportions had almost completely flipped: nearly 80% of students now think it important to be well-off and only 40% apparently care about developing a philosophy of life. The bottom line: most are viewing college as a vocation training or career prep experience.***

*What most of these students often don't understand—is those who do well in the long run tend to have a clear vision of what it means to be a person, how to treat others, and what they value in life—you must use this experience to get a really deep understanding of yourself.*

*It's worth reflecting on the fact that if we looked at the Jesuit resume we would have predicted their inevitable failure: after all, as I mentioned at the start of this talk, they had no business plan, no focus, no capital, and so on. And I suspect that if we looked at some of your personal histories, we might have predicted that some of you too would have failed. Some of you may come from families where no one has ever gone to college, or from poor families, or lived in neighborhoods where the primary schooling was sub-par. Many of you have succeeded not because everything in your life made it easier for you to succeed, but because, like those early Jesuits, you have drawn on qualities within that have motivated you to surmount challenges you face.*

*You are all now in circumstances that would predict your likely success in the world: you're not only pursuing higher education, but doing so at an elite school. But though the education, social tools, and network you acquire here can be invaluable to you in whatever occupations you pursue, the early Jesuit example should remind you that those internal qualities and values that got you here in the first place may be more important indicators drivers of success, fulfillment, and happiness than the more conventional tools like good resume, capital, and so on.*

## **Ingenuity:**

Having spoken now about heroism and self-awareness, let me touch only briefly on the concept of ingenuity—briefly because it's intuitively obvious to any 21<sup>st</sup> century businessperson that ingenuity—the ability to adapt, to be creative, to change course and develop new products or approaches, is absolutely essential in our changing world. During the time I worked at JP Morgan, for example, we once calculated that each year about 1/3 of our revenue was coming from businesses or products that hadn't even existed five years earlier—in other words, to remain competitive and profitable we basically had to re-create ourselves every few years, and I know most of you are in similarly challenging circumstances. So, when these 16<sup>th</sup> century Jesuits tell us they have to be change-adaptive, they tell us nothing we don't already know.

In the early 1600s a Jesuit named Roberto de Nobili arrived in India. Within a few years, he had gotten rid of the black clothing that was

customary for a priest. Instead, he was wearing a simple robe like a Hindu holy man. Like them, he had become a vegetarian. He marked himself on the forehead with the same insignia they wore. He studied Sanskrit and began writing treatises that used Hindu terminology and ideas. For some of his contemporaries, he was a scandal. The bishop in India asked the Inquisition to investigate him. Eventually a Vatican commission investigated what he was teaching and his methods. In the end, he was completely vindicated. Much of his approach in the 1600s is now what every seminary in the world would teach as the proper way to dialogue with different cultures and religious traditions.

When I think of Fr. De Nobili in the 1600s, I'm reminded of the work in the 1990s by two business school professors, one at Harvard, John Kotter, and the other at Stanford, Jerry Porras. They researched, independently, companies that had performed extremely well, and came up with interestingly consistent conclusions. Most highly successful companies had a culture, a way of doing things, that combined two elements: one, people had a good sense of some core values—this is what we're all about here; this never changes; this is why we come to work all day—that was their anchor. On the other hand, they also had built into the culture an impetus, a push, to always be changing in response to the changing competitive environment. So, for example, Fr. De Nobili knew well the core Christian dogmas he was unwilling to change. He was very open to changing the way he communicated those values and how he could approach an environment so different from his native environment.

So, how did they in the 16<sup>th</sup> century instill a mindset that we in the 21<sup>st</sup> still have trouble achieving? I find the key in one of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises and a concept that he calls detachment or indifference. Ignatius tells the story of a man who inherits a fabulous sum of money, and then proposes the question or meditation of what to do with it. Our instinct is to think that the solution must be to give the money to the poor and rejoice piously. But he says, no, what we should strive for is the kind of freedom—he calls it detachment or indifference—that would allow us to keep the money or give it away, making the decision based only on what best serves our goal—for Jesuits, of course, the goal is to serve God's greater glory, but the human part of the insight remains valid if you substitute whatever is the end goal for which your company strives.

In other words, we're only going to be free enough to be true risk-takers, ingenious, adaptive, creative, flexible in our business approach-

es when we have first identified, come to grips with, and freed ourselves from personal attachments: to the ways we've always done it, to our status, to our possessions, to our fear of taking risk, to our particular institutional structures, before. Let me give an example: everyone who has worked in mergers and acquisitions business knows that some mergers that would greatly enhance shareholder value don't happen simply because one CEO is too attached to his own ego and status and doesn't want to give up control in a merged entity. The opposite *also* occurs: lousy mergers occur simply because some ego-attached CEO wants a bigger corporate sandbox. I use mergers for a reason. There was a very interesting NY Times article last year pondering the fact that a large number of corporate mergers simply don't work: they don't deliver any added value to shareholders.

### **Love:**

We've spoken now about heroism and self-awareness at some length, about ingenuity briefly, and so I would like to move on to the value about which anyone from a corporate background would surely be more skeptical: what place could love possibly have in a large company? First of all, let me assure you that I didn't patrol the hallways of JP Morgan embracing my colleagues and telling them I loved them, nor am I recommending you do that in your respective workplaces. Anyway, Ignatius told his colleagues that 'love ought to manifest itself in deeds, not words.' So let me elaborate on what deeds might show the impact of love in a work, team, or other setting.

How about this for starters as love in action with clear bottom-line impact: surely no corporate leader who loved employees would recklessly gamble their pensions and livelihoods to prop up his or her stock option value. Think of all the other kinds of examples in our other environments that would also be applicable here: surely no government worker or politician who loved the citizens he or she was entrusted with serving could engage in the kind of corruption that takes their money or deprives them of the government services to which they are entitled.

But all of these examples, legitimate though they are, have a vaguely negative ring, as if love might guide us in the workplace only by saving us from perpetrating outrageous ethical misdeeds. And I would also like to talk about some of the richer, more positive dimensions of love in the workplace.

Let's start to do so by reflecting on the very word of the word 'Company.' I would note that the formal name the Jesuit founders chose for their company was, in their native Spanish, *Compañía de Jesús*, company of Jesus. The word Jesuit was coined later as a kind of nickname. And the way they understood 'company' is not what we would typically understand today. Although nowadays the meaning of the word company has been almost completely hijacked by commercial enterprise, recall that the Latin roots of the word are *cum panis*, 'together' and 'bread', in other words, a company was the group of people with whom you might 'break bread'...in the 16<sup>th</sup> century a 'company' would more often refer to a religious group, a military troop, or even a group of friends. These early Jesuits clearly saw themselves as companions of each other, and that this companionship would energize their efforts. The Jesuit *compania* is offering us the challenge of getting our own *companias* back to this root concept: groups characterized by mutual support that energizes team members...that might even be fun.

Everyone knows that children learn and perform more productively when they are raised, taught, and mentored by families and teachers and coaches who value them as important and dignified, who set high standards, who create environments of love rather than fear. Why have we somehow convinced ourselves that our adult needs are so different? The best teams I've been on have thrived precisely because there was trust, mutual support, real respect for each other's talents, real interest in helping others succeed, and a willingness to hold each other accountable to high standards so that each of us might realize our fullest personal and team potential.

Ignatius of Loyola was unafraid to call this bundle of behaviors love, which is precisely what it is when these behaviors are supercharged by a self-aware vision that those I work and play with are not merely 'resources' for me to use but individuals as worthy of respect and support as I am. Accordingly, he told Jesuit bosses to manage with "all the love and modesty and charity possible" so that teams could thrive in environments filled with "greater love than fear." Why did Loyola insist on this? Well, in one of his Spiritual Exercises he tells us to reflect on the fact that each human being "is God's temple" made in God's image and likeness. And, if we believe this is true, then it surely has implications for how we ought to treat our fellow humans. I suspect that some of what I just quoted may make some of us feel somewhat uncomfortable. You came for a business symposium, not for a religious sermon! But what I'm talking about *is* fundamentally business related. Because

once you begin to think this way, you see people completely differently...and you treat them differently...and your organizations prosper.

*The Jesuits had the imagination to open successful reducciones in Brazil simply because they saw something different when they looked at the indigenous persons of Brazil. You know that in the early decades of the colonial era, one of the key debates among so-called sophisticated Europeans was whether the indigenous persons of Africa and the Americas were even human beings. One European wrote that the people he encountered in the Americas were basically "Beasts of the forest...squalid savages, ferocious and most base, resembling wild animals in everything but human shape." Those Jesuits who set up reducciones obviously thought something very different. Listen to the words of one Jesuit working in Brazil, speaking of the very same people that other Europeans were calling beasts: "Are these people not the children of Adam and Eve?...Are not these bodies born and do they not die as ours do? Do they not breathe the same air? Are they not covered by the same sky? Are they not warmed by the same sun?"*

I've spent a long time now talking about human respect, because I see some worrying trends in the U.S. workplace. I'm worried that we need to start adopting different ways of working and leading. I will be talking about what is happening in the world of work in the United States, but let's be frank. In a globalizing world, what happens in the US is already happening elsewhere.

On the one hand, the American economy is a wonderful system that has created new jobs and opportunities for countless millions of people in my country over the past decades.

But this dazzlingly resourceful economy nonetheless takes a large and mounting toll on the spirits of even those holding good jobs. No civilization in history has reaped such meager fulfillment from such prosperity as ours today. A scant 30% of Americans report themselves 'very happy' with their lives. Only half of Americans pronounce themselves happy at work; only 39% trust their own senior managers. Nearly half of Americans worry "frequently" about losing their jobs. The average work year in these unhappy, distrustful places is 20% longer than it was two generations ago. ....And this is the situation for people who have good jobs in the most prosperous civilization in the world. And you know as well as I do that many, many of our brothers and sisters do not even get a chance to participate. Nearly 2 billion of our brothers and sisters around the world must live on income of only \$2 per day. And nearly 1 billion of our brothers and sisters cannot even write their own name.



We have a wonderful economic model, but that model will only last and survive if dedicated, principled human beings within it can get better at treating their colleagues and clients and subordinates with the kinds of attitudes I just spoke about, and if we have people who are ingenious and heroic enough to figure out how to allow others to participate in this remarkable system.

All of the ideas that I've spoken of so far—self-awareness, heroism, and love—are values that any one of you may choose to take on as part of your own personal leadership project, at your homes, workplaces, or elsewhere in life. So let me use my last few minutes, by way of summary, to build a practical case for this Jesuit-style leadership approach from the ground up,

1. First, I hope you take away from these Jesuits their fundamentally different message about what leadership is: we *tend* to think of leadership as tactics—what we *do*; or status, the position we hold on an organization chart. And while leadership may be *projected* through status or tactics, it fundamentally is about *who* we are. It's not an act at work, but it's the set of values I stand for and project, it's the outlook I have on other human beings and how I display that... To lead well, focus on knowing yourself and what you stand for, and less on looking at movies about General Patton or reading books about Jack Welch and trying to imitate them.
2. If leadership is who we are, then it follows that we're all leading, and we're all leading all the time, well or poorly. And this is another different slant the Jesuits are taking on leadership. It follows from it that we should learn to focus more on the opportunities we have each day and less on the opportunities that have not yet come our way. None of us in our corporate lives can control all our circumstances, how other people will behave around us, or the opportunities presented to us. We can, however, *always* control our own behaviors and reactions. Ignatius of Loyola once had this to say: "Work as if success depended on your own efforts, but trust as if all depended on God." The subconscious message is incredibly important: *our* implicit assumption tends to be—if you get yourself into a specific job, you can make leadership impact; *their* implicit assumption is: you're going to be making impact whatever job you're in. Focus on the input you can control, not on what you can't control. It pre-figures, I believe, so much modern psychological insight: for example, the principle

that the healthiest individuals learn to ‘control the controllables’: highly proactive in the areas of life they can control, but free from obsession over what they cannot control. So how do we go about controlling the controllables:

3. Self-awareness is the key. Remember I introduced the idea that we need to move from subconscious to purposeful leadership. We need to get explicit about our strengths and weaknesses, our values, and the leadership legacy we each want to leave in the world. And once we’ve made that investment, we need to create mechanisms to focus every day on how we’re doing. I discussed earlier the examen, that daily tool Jesuits used to take mental pit stops... Every Jesuit trainee, then or now, went through the same month-long Spiritual Exercises which force him to get clear about his goals and values. Our culture tells us that we can buy a book in Madrid, read up on six quick rules, and be a better leader when the plane arrives in Barcelona. It’s nonsense. We all know that the best leaders are not winning because they know a few gimmicks but because they have something much more personal and profound that’s motivating them all day. The guys who have had to clarify their life’s purpose, goals, and personal values, are the guys who are winning for themselves and for their companies. This group gathered here today is a very high achieving cross-section of this region’s community, and I bet that if each were interviewed, we’d find a lot of you had endured some personal or professional testing process that was key to your later focus and resolve and performance. Likewise, these Jesuits help us to see that good leaders go through some process of reflecting on themselves as adults, and explicitly articulating their values as part of a ‘life project,’ the legacy we want to leave in the world.

The great beauty of this four-pillared formula for us gathered here today, is that not only did it make Jesuits more daring, adaptive, bolder, creative corporate warriors of the ilk we so prize, it also made them more principled. I don’t believe there is a magic formula in corporate life that guarantees we will be able to do well and be good, makes us successful while also making us better human beings—but this model offers at least the glimmer of that promise. And, yet more good news, unlike my book, which costs money to buy—the price of becoming better is nothing, nothing more than your own committed investment to self-awareness and to articulating your leadership values.

Before ending, let me issue a call to action for all of us in this room. Rarely has there been a moment when this Jesuit notion of what it means to be a human person, to lead, been so sorely needed in society, and each of us can play a role. Every pundit that I know of, whether speaking of business, the church, political or civic life, talks about the need for greater leadership. But though we all agree on the need, we can't articulate adequate solutions, in part because we're stuck with this broken idea of leadership that has only to do with status, position in a hierarchical chart, money, or power. Well, those in this room can teach society by the way we do business a unique, principled, and workable model of leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on the notion that everyone leads when role modeling values like those that I've outlined. I asked at the outset the we each think of the names of two or three living leaders, and I hope by now you think of your own name first when I say we need more competent, smart, virtuous businesspersons who can role model a way of leading for those who are on our teams, in our companies, and in our communities, by the way we live and work, how we treat our families and work colleagues and clients.

Thank you for listening, and best of luck in your own efforts to make yourselves, families, and workplaces more self-aware, ingenious, loving, and heroic places.

