

# THE C A P M I

BECOMING A LEADER OF

HOW YOUR INFLUENCE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD **BRADEN DOUGLAS**

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## IMPACT IS TRICKY

Have you ever had an idea that something was one way and later came to realize that you were totally off? When my wife and I moved into our first home, we didn't have neighbors yet. The house beside us was still in construction, and I waited expectantly for who those new neighbors would be. I always wanted to be that good neighbor. That neighbor who would cut the lawn for you, lend you a cup of sugar, shovel your walkway, and so on. Maybe the movie *The Truman Show* inspired me.

Finally, the day arrived when our neighbors moved in next door. A nice Filipino family with two young boys. A few days later, the dad was in the garden, and I thought this was my chance to introduce myself. I built up the courage, opened the door, and strolled over.

“Hi, congrats on moving to our neighborhood. My name is Braden,” I said.

He was a small, stalkerly man that spoke gently, and you could tell he was shy but quite nice. “Hello,” he said. “My name is Huijo, but it's tricky.”

I couldn't really hear his response, but I swear he said his name was "Tricky." "Great! It's nice to meet you, Tricky. If you need anything, and I mean anything, just let me know," I said in a very enthusiastic reply.

I walked back inside and told my wife about my new favorite neighbor named Tricky.

For the next two years, I keep calling him Tricky because I actually thought his name was Tricky, and he never corrected me. I wasn't shy either.

"Good morning, Tricky!" "How's the fence coming along, Tricky?" "Hey Tricky, can I borrow your pruners?"

Finally, one day, his wife and my wife (Jen) both arrived home at the same time, and they struck up a conversation on the driveway. After some small talk, Tricky's wife mentioned to Jen, almost embarrassed, "Do you know that your husband calls my husband Tricky?"

"Yes," Jen replied.

"Well, his name is Huijo, and he doesn't like being called Tricky. Would you be able to mention that to your husband?" she said.

"Yes, for sure. I don't think he knew his real name," Jen commented, trying to save me a bit of dignity.

Jen came inside laughing as she put the groceries down on the kitchen island.

"What's so funny?" I asked.

“You know our neighbor Tricky. Well, his name isn’t Tricky; it’s Huijo.”

“It’s what?” I said, realizing that I’ve been wrong for this long.

“Huijo,” she said.

“You mean I’ve been calling him Tricky for two years? And he hated it? And he didn’t say anything?” I said.

I felt so stupid and embarrassed. Poor Huijo. All of this could have been avoided if I’d only known.

And here’s the point for us.

Many leaders go through life thinking they are on the path to success only to realize late in life they were wrong. I hang out and work with leaders all the time, and many of them talk about leaving a legacy and wanting to make an impact.

But they don’t know what impact means. They are doing activities, trying to be good people, but they don’t really have an understanding of impact let alone a plan to achieve it.

Wanting to make an impact sounds good. Especially in today’s world, it’s very trendy to talk about having an impact and making the world better. But actually doing it is another level that most people never get to.

This is what we’re going to work through in this chapter: understanding what impact is and what it’s not so that you can understand it and start to focus on achieving it. This matters

big-time, as we need people, especially leaders with influence, to be people who are impactful.

## UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

Impact, as defined in the dictionary, is to have a strong effect on someone or something. Impact is not a specific action or an event alone. There are many people I meet who use “helping” interchangeably with “impact.” *Helping* and *impact* are not the same.

For example, we all know the old saying, “Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime.”

Giving the fish is *helping*. It’s a charitable act made out of compassion or duty or guilt or some other motivation toward them. Teaching them to fish is *impact*. It changes their behavior and thinking in a way that can last their lifetime and even be passed on to others in the present and future generations.

Giving to a charity is helping. Inspiring people to care for that charity’s cause is impact. Do you see the difference?

Impact is influence that inspires others toward perpetual positive behavior. Let me say that again: impact, as a leader should define it, is influence that inspires others toward perpetual positive behavior. As you can see, impact lasts.

John Maxwell, the famous leadership author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, says that “leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.”<sup>1</sup> He’s absolutely right, but it’s not complete. Leaders influence *and* can create impact. Having influence doesn’t automatically create an impact, but

it does provide an opportunity for it. In essence, impact is influence that inspires.

For example, parents have influence, and their impact is seen in how their kids grow and behave. Managers and bosses have a great deal of influence and can impact their employees with what they teach, how they work and model behavior, and how they build into their people. The same goes for consultants, retail store employees, mayors, teachers, volunteers, instructors, coaches, captains of sports teams—anywhere you have a position of direct or indirect influence, there is an opportunity for impact.

To reinforce, impact changes or alters the way someone thinks and inspires them to lasting positive behavior. Leaders do influence, but not every leader produces impact.

I love sports, and many times, I was named the captain of my sports teams, such as soccer, volleyball, tennis, cross-country, among others. But I was a terrible captain. I felt the position or title of captain was earned for being one of the most skilled players on the team. I would yell at my teammates to “motivate” them to work harder. I would criticize their lack of work ethic or make comments on mistakes, thinking that this was going to motivate them and others to raise their game. I didn’t know how a captain was supposed to act, and I genuinely thought I was doing a good job as captain, especially if we won. It wasn’t until I met Kevin Shonk that I realized I was dead wrong. The best part is that he probably doesn’t even know how much of an impact he had on me.

I arrived at Olympic Volleyball camp in northern Ontario with one of my teammates, Stephan Larass. My position was setter,

which meant I called the plays, touched the ball every second pass, and “set up” the hitters. Each camper was placed on a team with a player coach. The player coaches were older, experienced players, who would model and coach you as you played together as a team on the court. My coach was Kevin Shonk, a six-two power hitter with an amazing vertical jump who was an all-star for the Wilfrid Laurier University varsity team.

I walked onto the court, getting ready to call the plays, organize my team, garner their respect with my work ethic and ability, and lead them to victory. Then everything changed.

My player coach, Kevin, came bouncing on the court with an infectious energy. Smile brimming across his face, he approached each player with a low-to-the-ground sweeping high five and pulled the team together in the middle of the court.

“Are you ready for this?” he said.

“Yeah,” we replied in a quiet and hesitant way, trying to understand what planet this Energizer Bunny was from.

“Come on. We’re playing some ball. We’re about to run wild on this other team. Shout it. Are you ready for this?” he yelled.

“Yes,” we shouted back as we started bouncing a bit in unison with him in the court.

“I can’t hear you,” he continued.

“Yes!” we rocketed back in a loud thunderous voice.

“Still too quiet,” he said.



“YES!” we yelled as hard as we could, as we’re full-on jumping together in the court.

“Team 5 on three. One, two, three!” Kevin shouted.

“Team 5!” we all shouted back. We bounded back into our positions fired up, with big smiles, ready to take on the team across from us. That team could have been the US national squad, and we would have thought we could win.

That was good, but here’s the best part. We started playing, and the game was close. A fast serve came over the net. A teammate in the back row passed the ball up to me in a good position. I set it perfectly to our outside hitter. He jumped too early and whiffed on the ball, and it landed into the net.

“Come on, Pat. You gotta focus!” I was about to shout. But before the words came out of my mouth, Kevin jumped in.

“Good try, Patty. You almost had it. Keep swinging. The next one is yours,” he said, and gave him a high five and pat on the back.

Kevin looked over to me and gave me a wink. Kevin knew Patty should have crushed that set. What was he doing? Kevin knew that I should have been disappointed in Patty, but his response to Patty was not what I thought. Each play, regardless of the outcome, was met with positive affirmation.

The game continued, and we were deadlocked with this other team with only a few points to go. I was feeling the pressure. The ball came to me again, and I screwed up. I had set the ball to an empty space by the net, thinking a player should have been there. I gave the other team a crucial point.

“Sorry guys,” I said with my head down.

“Don’t even think about it. It happens. You’re killing it out here. You’ve got this!” Kevin buoyantly shouted.

“Shake it off. You’re carrying us, Braden,” said Patty as he gave me a big high five.

We went on to win the next few points and ultimately the game. We were pumped. We all walked off the court celebrating. I eventually sat down and started taking off my court shoes. Kevin came over and plunked himself down beside me.

“Heck of a game you played out there, Braden,” he said, still maintaining his big smile and energy.

“Thanks. It was fun. You rocked it too,” I replied.

“What did you notice about the team or how I lead?” he asked.

“You helped the team focus and kept us on track. You made big plays when we needed it,” I responded. I was a bit shocked at his question, as I didn’t usually reflect too much on leadership after a game.

“The focus and outcomes are all secondary. I never think about those,” he said.

“You don’t?” I asked, not really believing him because every competitive athlete thinks about winning.

“Nope. My job as the leader is to get people to love the game, believe in themselves, and want to keep playing at the highest

level on every play,” he said. “The results will come. And even if they don’t on that day, we’ll want to keep training our tail off together, until they do.”

That changed my entire way of thinking. I thought about what he said long after that day and still do.

Kevin made an *impact*.

If you ask my parents when I started to change and become a better leader, they will say sixteen years old at volleyball camp. I came home and became a new person.

Even today, as I lead a large agency of professional marketers, I try to inspire them to love marketing and to make a difference in the lives of others. This is how I combined a talent for marketing with having impact in the lives of others. (More on that journey will come.) I try to encourage my employees often so they believe in themselves. And I create a positive atmosphere that they are eager to show up to every day to do an amazing job for our clients and for themselves. The outcomes and performance will come when the confidence, belief, and desire is there.

I’m still not perfect (as my employees will attest to), but the impact of Kevin’s intentional coaching changed the way I want to lead going forward in life. I’m reminded even now as I write this that we don’t strive for perfection but, rather, for progress.

Everyone has the ability to impact.

I want you to say this to yourself, out loud, right now—yes, out loud—“Everyone has the ability to impact.”

Do you believe that? This is the first step in becoming a leader of impact. You have to believe, in your soul, that you can have an impact on others. That you have the ability, and I would say responsibility, to be a leader of impact. If you don't believe this truth, you might as well stop reading now because I can't help you.

But if you believe this statement—and it's a simple statement—you'll have the ability to start something that will carry itself farther than you'll believe.

## **IMPACT CREATES MOVEMENTS**

The measure of impact is in the size and scale of the movement that is generated. Impact can be created in intentional words or actions.

Consider Rosa Parks and her story of impact.

Rosa Parks was the secretary of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in the 1950s at a time when southern confederate states had adopted laws that segregated black and white citizens in public facilities, public transportation, and retail stores.

In 1955, around 6 p.m., after a full day of work, Rosa climbed onto the Montgomery city bus with driver James F. Blake—the same bus driver who forced her off the bus and into the rain a few weeks earlier because more white people boarded the bus, and there weren't enough seats for everyone. That was humiliating.

On this day, as more people loaded onto the bus, the white

section became full. Blake stood up from his driver's seat and walked down the aisle to the middle of the bus.

"Y'all better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats," he told them as he looked down over the four black passengers. At first, no one moved.

"Let me have those seats," Blake said again, his tone becoming more stern. Three of the four passengers begrudgingly got up and moved to the back of the bus. But not Rosa. She stayed and moved closer to the window, digging in.

"If you don't stand up, I'm going to call the police and have you arrested," he warned.

"You may do that," Rosa responded.<sup>2</sup>

The police arrived and charged Rosa with violation of the Chapter 6 Section 11 segregation law of the Montgomery city code.

She wasn't the first person to boycott the city bus system, nor was she the key mastermind or leader of the equality movement, like Martin Luther King Jr., but her determination, will, and refusal to give in that day created an impact.

A few days later, after the thirty-minute trial that found Rosa guilty, the NAACP organized leaflets and distributed them to black churches and neighborhoods, asking for black citizens to boycott the buses on Monday, December 5. A front-page article in the *Montgomery Advertiser* helped spread the word.

The boycott strategy was a success in raising awareness and

uniting the black community to stand up for equal rights. This led to more boycotts and marches.

Rosa was a smart, caring, responsible woman, and the unfair treatment of her because of archaic laws sparked an injustice. Rosa impacted her community to take a stand. She didn't need compelling speeches or to be in a position of authority, but she dug in and became a force of influence. If Rosa could do it, so could we.

“People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in,” said Rosa.

Rosa Parks became an icon for the civil rights movement. It would have a cost on her and her family, as she and her husband would lose good jobs because of the controversy, but there was no denying her impact.

The size of the impact is seen in the longevity of action that it continues to spurn. Movements are started from impact.

## **PERSONAL EXERCISE**

Just plowing through a book is easy, but I want these ideas to stick for you. I've added some simple exercises to help you develop the thinking that will be needed to make progress. The first exercise involves writing down the names of people who have made an impact on you throughout your life. Making a list of some of the people who impacted you allows you to

develop a keener sense of understanding of what impact looks like: the many shapes and forms in which impact occurs and how crucial or lasting that effect can be. It drives home the power of impact on a personal level.

As you reflect on your life, think about the people who have had a positive impact on you. Who were they? A teacher. Coach. Boss. Friend. Family. What did they do or say that has resonated with you?

Write the names of three to five people, and beside each name, write the impact they had on you. Try to be as concrete as possible. For example, if you had a teacher who impacted you, don't say, "They were great and made me feel good." That's vague and not helpful. Instead, try to remember the story or context that made you feel that way, such as, "My speech to the class was going terribly, and I started to cry, but my teacher stood up and congratulated me for having the courage to be vulnerable."

Do you have your list of people and the impact they've had?

Now, I want you to imagine the people in your life: family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, employees, teammates, suppliers, and anyone else.

How many of them, if they did this exercise, would put your name down? How many would have a story about how you impact them or have had an impact on them in the past?

We do this exercise with every LeaderImpact group I've led because it makes impact a reality that you can feel. And yes, this exercise is designed to make you feel guilty. I'm sorry. It's

even hard for me, and I'm writing this book. But those feelings mean you don't like it, which is good. I hope it inspires you to take the challenge of becoming a person of impact more seriously, more intentionally.

## **KEYS TO REMEMBER**

You have the ability to make an impact, but remember these three key points.

1. Impact is not the same as helping. It's about influence that inspires. That inspiration causes positive thinking, beliefs, and attitudes that lead to better outcomes for people.
2. Everyone has the ability to impact. It doesn't matter what role you have, who you are, or whether you are brilliantly skilled. If you have direct or indirect influence over someone, you can have an impact in their life.
3. Impact spreads and creates a movement. It's not a monumental action or occurrence; impact can happen every day if you are intentional and take hold of the opportunities with people. Small consistent steps with intention create momentum that turns into a movement.

Being in a leadership position and talking about impact is easy. Becoming a leader of impact is where it gets, well, tricky.



## MAKING AN IMPACT IS ESSENTIAL FOR LEADERS

who want to create positive change and leave a legacy—a trendy thing to say, but a hard tenet to live by.

LeaderImpact, a movement of professionals dedicated to inspiring one another in this quest, has worked with leaders, entrepreneurs, and CEOs for decades to facilitate life-changing results. Now Braden Douglas discusses their philosophy for success in ***BECOMING A LEADER OF IMPACT***. Filled with real-world examples and engaging stories, this guidebook will inspire you toward impactful change in all areas of your life, from the personal and professional, to even the spiritual.

The world needs leaders, like you, to step up and leave a legacy. Your impact starts here.



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