



ROADMAP *to* Success

AMERICA'S TOP INTELLECTUAL
MINDS MAP OUT SUCCESSFUL
BUSINESS STRATEGIES



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BE LEGENDARY

JAMES CARTER

DAVID WRIGHT (WRIGHT)

Today I am speaking with previous collaborative author James Carter, the Founder and CEO of Be Legendary. Be Legendary is an idea that will change the world one action, one person, one moment at a time.

Be Legendary has worked with a diverse clientele, from corporate and philanthropic entities, down to the everyday individual, enabling leaders, teams, and organizations to reach their legendary potential.

James, welcome to ROADMAP to Success!

JAMES CARTER (CARTER)

Thank you, David. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my own road map.

WRIGHT

Now that you mention it, what is your road map to success?

CARTER

Before I begin giving you details about my particular road map, I want to first define our destination—success.

The success I am describing is the ultimate success we have in life—our legacy. What are we leaving behind? How do you leave behind a legendary life? And where do you start?

Creating that legendary legacy is the success I am speaking about—the destination on my road map. However, you cannot have that legendary

legacy without Being Legendary throughout life. So I will concentrate on what you can do to be legendary every day of your life

WRIGHT

Okay, that's great to know for our readers. Tell us about your road map.

CARTER

I also want to be absolutely clear—what do I mean when I say “Be Legendary”? I mean having the courage to take action based upon your core beliefs to make a positive difference in the world around you.

Be Legendary is:

Not about being better than anyone else.

Not about glory or fame.

Not a goal to achieve.

Be Legendary is our own personal evolution. It is the discovery and rediscovery of the very best of who we are, and who we can be.

WRIGHT

I can't wait to hear more about your road map!

CARTER

A few years ago I began researching “Legendary” people—Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Gandhi—to see how they accomplished so much in life, were able to leave such an incredibly legacy, and what they have in common. If there are commonalities, can they be learned?

It was an incredible process as I studied all of these amazing people and was continually inspired by what was possible.

Then one day I was surfing the Internet looking for information on legendary people I may not know. I found an article with the most amazing story. It goes like this:

The Janitor Story

A few years ago, a young reporter noticed his little town had completely filled up with people one day—the town was packed with cars and people were everywhere. Every extra bedroom had a relative or two in it, hotel

rooms were booked, and restaurants were packed. He checked the calendar. No holiday, no festival, no parade. What was going on?

He began asking around and quickly found out that everyone had come into town to attend a funeral. So he began asking more questions.

After talking to more than a dozen people, he heard a similar story—they were attending the funeral of a man they barely knew and most had only known for a short time. And yet these people had travelled from all over the world when they heard the news of this mystery man's passing. In fact, almost ten thousand people had come to town that day to pay their respects.

Who was this funeral for? Was it someone who changed the country? A movie star or musician? Someone extremely wealthy?

As it turned out, the man had worked in this small town, in the same place, for forty-five years. He worked in a middle school and these were all students who had passed through the school in those forty-five years, most only knowing him for three.

The reporter then naturally asked what this person did at the school. Was he a principal, a favorite teacher? No he was not. He was, in fact, the janitor at the school.

Somehow, without any direct authority, this man was able to affect thousands of young people and leave such an effect that they left their lives and family for a few days and journey to see him.

It's almost staggering to think of what he accomplished. But if almost ten thousand people actually attended the funeral, just imagine how many were not able to make the trip!

After reading the article, I was amazed at the influence someone like that can have. Several days later I had an epiphany that was like seeing the first star come out after sunset. This man, this janitor, was legendary! But very much like after seeing the first star, I began seeing everyday legendary people everywhere! And now I had a number of people I could speak to about what they have done, how they have done it, and why.

Of course, a common denominator was that not a single one of them would accept the idea that he or she was legendary!

Stop and think for a moment. Picture in your mind a legendary person in your life like the janitor. We *all* have at least one person in our lives like this. While we talk about Be Legendary, I want you to keep that person in mind and see if they fit.

WRIGHT

I can think of a couple of people who are simply amazing and seem to infect everyone around them with positive energy and yet, are just like you and me.

CARTER

Exactly! If you look around for more people like that, you will begin to see them everywhere, just like I did—stars after sunset.

Well, through the process of speaking with so many legendary people, both famous and non-famous, I realized they have all mastered three areas of their lives. To make it simple, we call this the ABC's of Being Legendary:

Awareness

Beliefs

Courage

WRIGHT

Will you be taking us through the ABC's as part of your road map?

CARTER

Absolutely. As luck would have it, they *are* the road map!

So let's begin with A, which stands for awareness. There is a constant battle for our awareness. Many entities are trying to get us to pay attention—advertisements, commercials, politicians, even the news. Unfortunately, the easiest way to grab and hold our attention is by getting us to focus on negative “stuff.” Not only do we have the media throwing negative images, videos, and stories at us constantly, we have all been trained since we were very young to focus on the negative.

WRIGHT

We have been *trained*?

CARTER

Yes, look at our education system. Beginning in first grade, children get their homework back with red marks all over, highlighting what they have done—wrong. Our educational system helped us to be acutely aware of what we were doing wrong.

What might happen if we highlighted all the answers children get right?
How different might our education system be?

But our training begins even before we enter our education system. A few years ago, researchers put recording devices on five-year-old children. They found that as much as 90 percent of the time, communication surrounding these children was negative:

How bad things are,
Who is to blame,
What was done wrong and
What not to do.

From the time we were small children, we were taught to be more aware of the negative. This continued through our lifetime up to and including today. We are experts at being critical and analytical, exposing faults, and debunking arguments. We have been taught to find problems and fix them, then repeat!

This alone is not a bad thing. In fact, it is an incredibly powerful tool and a strength many possess and use very well. However, if we use this all the time and we use nothing else, it becomes a weakness.

As I said before, seeing legendary people was like seeing stars after sunset. At first, I was trained to see other people's mistakes and errors. Once I began to focus on the great things people were doing, I began to see it everywhere and a starlit sky emerged. And you know what? I felt *good*! I began a few years ago to retrain my awareness and intentionally see more of the great things people are doing.

That does not mean I don't see the negative. I do! I simply don't spend any energy focusing on the negative. This takes practice at first, but becomes easier because it feels good.

We are now seeing many people shift, as I have, and focus on what we really want—to see a world filled with amazing people doing amazing acts and creating legendary lives.

One key to your shaping your awareness is to understand what you *want*. Focus on what you want.

Let me give you a couple of examples of what I am speaking about.

Sports psychology is a great example, as they have actually been focusing on awareness and what you want for some time.

In an experiment, people were taught how to bowl—knocking down ten pins with a large, heavy ball. They were divided into two groups and videotaped. One group was shown videotapes of their successes. The other group was shown videos of their mistakes. Who do you think improved?

WRIGHT

Well, I am guessing the group shown successes improved.

CARTER

You are half right. Both groups improved! However, the group shown their successes improved *twice* as much as the other group. This is a key point. Focusing on the negative and what you get wrong achieves results. However, focusing on what we want, and our successes, achieves much more.

This idea is now used in every sport and in every coaching situation and we understand now what affect our vocabulary has on us as well.

In golf, coaches teach students to imagine *and say* to themselves, “hit the ball in the fairway,” instead of “don’t hit the ball into the trees.”

So the words we choose are critically important to our success and a key part of our awareness. Words reinforce our thoughts.

The golfer who pictures the fairway but says to himself, “Don’t hit the ball into the water,” only *really* mentally hears, “Hit the ball into the water.” Where does the ball go? You know the answer—right where he told it to go and in the water.

You may see now that consciously controlling our awareness is critical.

The research with the five-year-olds and our education system clearly shows us how we have been essentially *trained* to see the negative and when we focus upon that, how easy it is to miss the opportunities to Be Legendary.

So then, the question is how do I retrain my awareness? You can begin to control your awareness by carefully selecting what you are paying attention to:

- Are you looking at your successes versus mistakes?
- What do you automatically see in other people?
- What vocabulary are you using? Are you using positive vocabulary?

You don't need to *stop* doing everything, but begin making small changes to reduce negative messages and emotion in your life.

WRIGHT

For now, for argument's sake, let's just assume that you were consciously controlling your awareness. What is next?

CARTER

I am so glad you asked because that is exactly where I was going. This brings us to B, or Beliefs. In a classic study that is now called the Pygmalion Effect, researchers told teachers that certain students had unusually high potential for success in school. The children were, in fact, selected at random. Several months later, the chosen few were far surpassing their classmates. Why? The teachers gave the high potential students a little more attention, a little more encouragement and these were in line with the teachers' expectations.

The students own self-image had changed based upon the teacher's belief. The *belief* of the teachers had become the student's *reality*. In other words, *beliefs* create *reality*.

The application for this is everywhere. There is very little about human behavior, including our beliefs that are set in stone and unchangeable. So if beliefs create our reality, it is incredibly important to know which are most important to us and spend time on them.

Here is the critical question to think about: what are your beliefs? And are those beliefs truly your own? Are they something you adopted from someone, typically our parents? Or were taught?

I cannot stress how important this is if you want to lead a legendary life. You will not recognize opportunities to act unless you first know which are valuable. Take the time and write down what your deepest values and beliefs are and I think you will surprise yourself at what you find. We simply don't spend time thinking about them and yet, our beliefs drive everything we do.

We have created what we call the Legendary Intent. Our Legendary Intent is created by completing a simple, yet powerful, sentence: "If I accomplish nothing else in this life, I will—"

WRIGHT

A challenging statement. Can you give me an example?

CARTER

Yes, it is a challenging statement. Another way to think about it is to picture your headstone at your grave. The completion to this sentence could be on your headstone. Let me give you an example.

I worked with an executive recently who was struggling with the morale of her company and specifically, her core group of executives. She had a core belief that “joy” was incredibly important in life. After some introspection and coaching she realized her Legendary Intent was: “If I accomplish nothing else in this life, I will create joy in the lives of those around me.”

She decided that if “I created joy in the lives of those around me” was written on her headstone, she would be thrilled with that.

She had a strong belief that her humor was great strength. Looking at her executives, she realized that neither she, nor her staff, laughed very much at work. Using her Legendary Intent as a filter, her “daily mission” was to find one opportunity to make someone laugh every day—just one. What she found was that there were far more opportunities than she ever realized and just like stars after sunset, she began to see them everywhere.

Just a few months later, the culture in her staff had completely changed and, indeed, the informal culture of the company was changing. Everyone was taking cues from her!

WRIGHT

Wow, that is incredible. So knowing our Beliefs and using that to create our Legendary Intent creates a filter through which we see the world. Is that right?

CARTER

Absolutely. We are essentially creating new lenses to filter in all the things we want. We will still see the negative things, but once you begin seeing this new world, you will want to keep the lenses on!

WRIGHT

So I am betting that since we covered Awareness and Beliefs, the A and B, that Courage is next!

CARTER

Right you are! When we know our Beliefs and have our Legendary Intent firmly in place, we essentially have a filter through which we see the world. We become Aware of opportunities to act. There is only one thing left to ensure action—Courage.

There are many different kinds of courage. Typically, we think of a physical action like soldiers in wartime. But that is just one kind of courage. Let me tell you a story as an example of one kind of courage.

Very recently, while looking for a non-profit partner for one of our philanthropic programs, we ran across a young man named Kyle Weiss. Kyle went to Europe at thirteen to see the FIFA World Cup and met a number of fans from Angola. He came home deciding to ship cleats and soccer balls over to Africa.

However, someone said, “Wait, don’t they need fields?,” and FUNDaFIELD (www.FUNDaFIELD.org) was born. Kyle and his brother Garrett recruited thirty other young people in junior high and high school and helped them see why they should care about other kids their age on the other side of the world. They all raised money the hard way, many times one cupcake at a time.

What is truly remarkable is that as a young teenager, Kyle had travelled to Africa, negotiated with local politics, construction companies and staff, and schools where they built the fields. He dealt with local corruption, facilitated community meetings, and communicated with international organizations to make the fields a reality.

Now eighteen and just graduating high school, Kyle has been to Africa seven times and built eight fields—all in different countries. He has also developed leadership within FUNDaFIELD so that when he goes to college this fall, the organization will stay strong and continue to build fields.

Do you see the Be Legendary pattern in Kyle’s actions?

1. **Awareness** – He became aware there was a problem for children in Africa to play soccer without shoes, a field, and even no balls.
2. **Belief** – He believed he could have an effect upon the problem
3. **Courage** – He says it really was not courage, he was just doing what he does.

Most of us stop at the Awareness area—we see and/or become aware of a problem or challenge and let it go at that. But because of Kyle’s passion for soccer and strong belief that every child should be able to play, courage was not really a factor—it was almost a given. It was just something that had to be done. Without knowing it, Kyle was living his Legendary Intent. I cannot wait to see what he accomplishes moving forward.

WRIGHT

Obviously an amazing person—young or not! I see the courage it must have taken for him to even fly over to Africa.

CARTER

While Kyle’s story is filled with obvious courage, there is one aspect of courage that is incredibly challenging and is not obvious—telling yourself the right story. He could have not acted because he told himself a different story:

- “I am too young to make a difference.”
- “No one will listen to me because I am a kid.”
- “They will think I am just some American with money telling them what to do.”
- “I will do something after I graduate from college.”

Have you said something like that to yourself? I have. It is easy. And self-defeating. These are limiting stories and keep us from taking action when that is exactly what we need and want to do.

We run an activity with executives to help them experience how easy it is to not tell ourselves the right story. In this activity, partners pair up and are told to draw a picture of each other in sixty seconds.

During the sixty seconds you can hear them laughing and saying things like:

"I am *so* sorry."

"This is *terrible*."

"Please don't be offended!"

"How awful!"

Why? Why are they awful? Because their experience automatically compares your sketch to the Mona Lisa, right?

I think we can agree the picture I draw of my partner is *not* a da Vinci! But should I really be comparing myself to da Vinci? Can I only be proud of my sketch if it compares to a professional artist?

The same is true when it comes to legendary people. I meet and interview legendary people (who I believe are legendary). When I suggest they are legendary (by our definition above), they all say the same thing, "Not me! Someone else maybe, but not me." Not a single person has said they were legendary. And I have met some truly *legendary* people. Humility is a common characteristic of legendary people.

Think of the janitor. If you walked up to him and said he was legendary, what do you think he might have said? He would have thought it was ridiculous!

Do you know what first-graders do after I ask them to draw a picture of their partner? They stand up, proud as can be to show off their pictures:

"Look at mine!"

"Mine is *awesome*!"

"SaaWeet!"

And they clap and cheer for each other's drawings, each one of them a da Vinci. They have not learned they are not artists, yet.

Remember, Be Legendary is not about being the best, or even better than someone else. Be Legendary is you at your best and having the courage to act upon your Legendary Intent.

What is the right story to tell yourself? "This is the very best drawing I can do in sixty seconds with the artistic skill that I have. I am proud of it."

Have the courage to hold your artwork up high, have the courage to tell yourself the right story, and have the courage to believe and say, "I can be legendary, too." When you do that, you are harnessing your courage in a way that makes taking action very simple.

WRIGHT

The ABC's of Be Legendary is a fantastic model for creating the life you want. I am wondering how, in our busy lives, do we possibly remember to follow the ABC's and take action?

CARTER

Consider the U.S. penny, the smallest form of currency. Pennies are the most common man-made item on Earth. There are more than 130 billion pennies in existence today and 6.5 billion in circulation—in our pockets, in cash registers, and even laying on the ground.

There are so many pennies that many times we don't even see them. If you are like me, when I *do* see them on the ground, I am so busy I don't even take the time to bend over and pick them up. And why not? Because they simply are not valuable enough.

But they do have value, don't they? What is each penny worth? One cent—1/100th of a dollar. If you add up one hundred cents, you'll get a dollar. And dollars can add up.

I will take those 6.5 billion pennies! Just dump them on my driveway and I will roll them and everything!

And if I were to look through the 6.5 billion pennies carefully, I would find tens of thousands of pennies that are actually worth real money—more than a penny and in most cases worth \$10 or more.

In fact, the most valuable penny in circulation today is valued at \$35,000. I don't know anyone, not billionaires, who would walk by a \$35,000 penny.

How do you find a valuable penny? Three things:

1. You have to be Aware of the pennies.
2. You have to know what a valuable penny looks like (Legendary Intent – what is valuable to you) and Believe that every penny has value.
3. You have to act – take the extra two seconds it takes to pick up the penny and risk people possibly thinking you are crazy (Courage) for picking up pennies.

So what do these valuable pennies look like? I have no idea. I really don't! What interests me is how pennies are like acts that make a difference. An act that makes a positive difference in the world is just one

act—one penny. Some acts are more valuable than others—a valuable penny—but still just one act. It is the accumulation of pennies, and acts, that is important, not any single act.

There are around 6.5 billion pennies in existence in the world today. There are around 6.5 billion people on Earth. In essence, we are all just a penny. The difference is, we get to decide what our value will be!

The legendary people you may be thinking of in your lives are more valuable than one penny. But these people cannot do it alone.

Your life is essentially a collection of pennies, a collection of actions. Spend time thinking about your actions, your pennies, and become more aware of them, their value and why, where do your beliefs fit in, and did it take courage to act. Also, have the courage to give yourself the credit you deserve. Celebrate your successes! If you do, I think you will find your current collection of legendary actions is far greater than you might think.

It is my greatest hope that people will read this and every time they see a penny, they will think of Be Legendary and take an action to make a difference.

WRIGHT

Do you have any common acts that people do so that we can begin immediately?

CARTER

Oh, there are literally thousands of *great* acts out there. You can look at our Web site, www.BeLegendary.org for stories and videos of everyday people leading legendary lives. Google “acts making a difference” or something like it and you will find great ideas.

One of the blogs that I follow is by Marie Wikle, the creator of Spreading Joy. It is really inspirational and keeps me going. She is truly amazing and started with nothing except a desire to spread joy.

However, each of us has an amazing opportunity to consistently affect people every day in a meaningful way.

What am I talking about? Conversation. Conversation is one of the single greatest contributions you can make. Talking to others about their beliefs and sharing your own. Creating space to disagree and re-evaluate your own values and be open to expanding your awareness is critical, as long as it is authentic. You can talk about the weather, if you want, or something else trivial. Or you can have a deeper conversation around

something more important and develop relationships that you otherwise could not do.

It may be a bit uncomfortable in the beginning because we are not practiced at it. We are used to surface communication and talking about the minutiae of our day—our boss and other trivial discussion. Get through that. Take a risk, have the courage and have a real conversation. Share a legendary story of your own or someone else's and ask if they have seen something like that lately. You can have great conversations that are also very comfortable.

I challenge you to have great, authentic conversations. Each one of them is important and valuable.

WRIGHT

Many of our readers are businesspeople. How would an executive or manager bring the spirit of Be Legendary into their organization?

CARTER

Most of the work we do is in exactly this arena. While companies hire us to come in and help them, there is a great deal that a single leader can do to create a legendary workplace.

The idea is to connect a person's heart and mind to his or her job and to the company. This may seem daunting, if not impossible, but it is completely achievable. And best yet, this is also what people want! We all want to work in a place in which people support one another, develop deep and meaningful relationships, and know that their daily life has meaning. Help them focus on what they want.

Let's look at each of the ABC's and I will briefly provide some suggestions you can take:

Awareness – Have a conversation with each of your staff and help them understand what they *really* want. What do you (staff person) want? Use our Legendary Intent model to help phrase questions:

If you wanted to accomplish only *one* thing today, what would it be? Why?

If you could only have *one* thing in this job, what would it be? Some suggestions are: job security, great teamwork, projects that challenge you, and so on.

What is the *one* thing that you want to learn while you are here to take to your next job, either in this organization or in the next?

There are many questions you could create and should want to know the answers to from your staff.

Next, of course, is “How can I (the manager) help you achieve those answers?”

Beliefs – You can do this in a larger group and in a very fun way. We have some activities that work for this, but the goal is to discover what are the individual beliefs of the people in the room? What are the common core values and beliefs?

You can have everyone put a single belief or value on a sticky note and use a wall, projection screen, or flipchart to begin grouping them together.

It is absolutely amazing to see what the common core values and beliefs are in the group and how much everyone shares with one another.

Next is to look at the groups one at a time and connect them back to the job they do. Even to the tasks done on a daily basis. It may not seem obvious in the beginning, but if you keep up discussion, you will find connections between the beliefs and the organization.

Finally, what we (management) can do more of to emphasize our beliefs within the group. For example, if family is a core value or belief (very common), what opportunities can managers be watching for to create the feeling of family at the workplace?

Courage – As a leader, you need to show your courage through vulnerability. Always go first—always.

While you are asking questions in A and B above, be a complete participant. Don’t hold back and place yourself above your staff. You need to risk first and let others see your courage. Also, as a leader, you need to become an expert on trust—on how trust is developed and destroyed.

Both A and B above require taking a risk. If your staff does not trust you, it would take an enormous amount of courage and a large risk to answer your questions. The answers may not be what you want to hear.

Keep in mind, your shift to a legendary workplace will not occur overnight. Remember the example of the executive I mention earlier. It took a few months, but she was able to create a legendary culture among her staff. In turn, they began doing the same with their staff. The actions of one leader were leveraged throughout the entire organization.

WRIGHT

I see that you have a very interesting and unique graphic for your logo—a snail walking away from its shell. What is the significance of the snail?

CARTER

This our logo of Be Legendary. Do you see courage?

If you ever see this image, you will know the person has the inward goal of Being Legendary and you can support him or her.

I believe when enough of us are acting like our snail—strong beliefs, courage, and awareness of what we are leaving behind, we will see a tipping point in society that will transform the world as we know it.

I know this because it has happened in our lifetime. Our world changed on September 11, 2001. There was an unintended consequence no one could have predicted when the twin towers



fell. For a short time, the world was incredibly connected, incredibly kind, open, and honest.

We *all* wanted to feel connected to one another. You could see this everywhere you went. I was in New York City a couple of months after 9-11 and when you walked down the street, people looked you in the eye. People opened doors for one another. It was legendary and incredible!

And then one day it was gone.

So where did it go? Why did we let that connection slip away? It was because we were reactionary and not *intentional* in our action. Living a Legendary Life is intentional.

When enough of us live Legendary Lives, we will feel that connection again. It is already happening in some communities around the world. It can, and is, happening everywhere.

This is the destination we all want on our road map.

Remember when I asked you to think of someone legendary in your life? This person is legendary to you, right? Do you think he or she considers himself or herself legendary? Probably not, which makes the person even more legendary. Regardless of what the person thinks, he or

she *is* legendary, whether the person likes it or not because you think he or she is.

The janitor was on the legendary list of more than ten thousand people.

Oh, by the way, you are on someone's list, too. You already *are* legendary for someone! Be Legendary for yourself, too.

WRIGHT

Thank you, James. I appreciate all the time you've spent to talk with us about your road map to success—Be Legendary.

CARTER

My pleasure, as always, David.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



James Carter is the Founder and CEO of Be Legendary, a socially inspired team and personal development company.

James has created emotional learning and philanthropic experiences for thousands of participants through executive retreats and large meetings. James' passion lies in helping each person feel valuable as an individual who is part of the whole. Clients consistently report that his energy, passion, and unshakeable belief in giving back to the community are the key factors in their decision to work with Be Legendary.

James is currently authoring *Be Legendary, the ABC's* while running his company, Be Legendary. He makes his home in Northern Nevada with his wife, Christina, and daughter, Isabella.

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