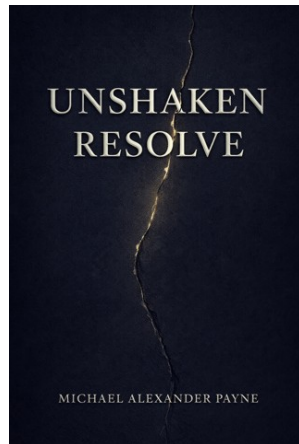


THE COMPANION WORKBOOK

UNSHAKEN RESOLVE

TAKEAWAYS AND ACTION ITEMS



Michael Alexander Payne

Lead Unshaken

15 chapters. Practical commitments. Space to put the lessons to work.

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Use and print your workbook

Review the takeaways, write your responses, and check each action item when it is complete. Work through one chapter at a time or print only the chapter you need.

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Chapter guide

01 Change Is the Environment	3–5
02 Calm Is Contagious	6–8
03 Identity Before Authority	9–11
04 Walking Into the Fire	12–14
05 Influence Without Rank: Leading From the Middle	15–17
06 Proximity and Scale	18–20
07 Culture: What Right Looks Like	21–23
08 Strength With Compassion	24–26
09 Multiplication and the Thousand-Year Blueprint	27–29
10 Resilience Under Emotional Weight	30–32
11 Integrated Wholeness: Leading From a Unified Life	33–35
12 Service Runs in the Bloodline	36–38
13 Small Hinges, Big Doors	39–41
14 The Homecoming: Becoming and Passing It On	42–44
15 Letters to Leaders	45–47

Page ranges above are PDF page numbers. Chapters 1–14 reproduce the book's takeaways and action steps, with formatting cleaned for this workbook. Chapter 15 is adapted from Letters to Leaders.

CHAPTER 01

Change Is the Environment

Takeaways

- 01** Change is not a disruption to leadership. It is the setting. Leaders do not wait for stability. They learn to lead inside movement.
- 02** The danger is not change. It is being unprepared for it. Seasons shift whether you are ready or not.
- 03** Preparation is the separator between panic and performance. Under pressure, you do not rise to your potential. You fall to your preparation.
- 04** Training stabilizes what emotion would otherwise disrupt. Composure is built before the crisis, not during it.
- 05** Stability is not the absence of stress. It is the presence of structure inside stress. Internal order creates external effectiveness.
- 06** Transformation can be engineered. Routines, standards, and clear expectations force growth.
- 07** Your anchors matter. Discipline and conviction shape how you respond when your environment shifts.

CHAPTER 01

Change Is the Environment

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Name the change you are in or see coming.** Write the top three changes affecting your life or leadership right now. Next to each one, write: What is at stake? Who is impacted?

☐ **2. Separate what you control from what you do not.** For each change, draw two columns: Control and Cannot Control. Commit to action only in the first column.

☐ **3. Build your Structure Inside Stress plan.** Identify three daily non-negotiables that keep you steady. Think in categories: faith, physical discipline, planning. Keep them realistic and repeatable.

CHAPTER 01

Change Is the Environment

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Create a simple crisis protocol.** Write a five-step sequence you will follow when pressure spikes. Pause. Breathe. Gather facts. Decide the next right action. Communicate clearly.

☐ **5. Run one weekly training drill.** Choose one skill to rehearse for fifteen minutes each week. A difficult conversation. Decision-making with limited information. Prioritization under time pressure. Leading a team through uncertainty. After each drill, ask three questions: What happened? What did I learn? What will I do differently next time?

☐ **6. Write your anchor statement.** In two to three sentences, define who you are without your title and what impact you are committed to. Read it every morning for seven days.

CHAPTER 02

Calm Is Contagious

Takeaways

- 01** Volatility reveals what comfort conceals. You do not truly know the condition of your leadership until pressure tests it.
- 02** Calm is contagious. So is panic. A leader's internal state transfers to the room whether the leader intends it to or not.
- 03** Speed is not always leadership. Sometimes it is anxiety in motion. Slow the room by slowing yourself first.
- 04** Structured questions create order. Under pressure, the right questions do more than gather facts. They force the moment to organize itself.
- 05** Distinguish real urgency from perceived urgency. If everything is an emergency, nothing is. Leaders must restore proportion, not mirror escalation.
- 06** Breathing is a leadership tool. Two controlled breaths interrupt the body's escalation cycle and return judgment to the leader.
- 07** External composure must be built on internal grounding. Calm rooted in technique eventually cracks. Calm rooted in identity holds.

CHAPTER 02

Calm Is Contagious

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Identify your escalation triggers.** Write down two or three situations that reliably cause your composure to slip. What physical signals warn you before it happens? Elevated heart rate, shortened breath, tightened jaw? Name them so you can catch them early.

☐ **2. Build your two-breath habit.** Before your next high-pressure conversation, meeting, or decision, take two slow controlled breaths before you speak. Practice this in low-stakes moments so it is available in high-stakes ones.

☐ **3. Develop your structured question set.** Write five questions you can ask in any tense or uncertain situation to slow the moment down and gather facts before reacting. Keep them simple. Keep them focused on what, where, who, and what is needed.

CHAPTER 02

Calm Is Contagious

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Audit your urgency responses this week.** At the end of each day, review one moment where you felt urgency. Ask honestly: Was that real urgency or perceived urgency? What drove the response? What would a more proportionate response have looked like?

☐ **5. Observe your transfer.** For one week, pay attention to how your presence affects the people around you. When you walk in tense, what happens? When you walk in steady, what changes? Leadership begins with awareness of your own transfer.

☐ **6. Examine your foundation.** Write one honest paragraph answering this question: When pressure removes the external structure around me — the title, the role, the authority — what is my composure actually built on? Be specific. That answer will shape everything in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 03

Identity Before Authority

Takeaways

- 01** Identity must precede authority. When external structure disappears, what remains is who you truly are, not what you were given.
- 02** Titles, rank, and position are platforms. They are not identity. Leaders who confuse the two will drift the moment the platform shifts.
- 03** Compromise does not announce itself. It erodes quietly. Small rationalizations compound into collapsed character over time.
- 04** Composure and wholeness are not the same thing. You can regulate on the outside while something critical is breaking down on the inside.
- 05** Strength is not protecting an image. It is protecting your long-term ability to serve. Hiding damage delays healing and shortens impact.
- 06** Leadership is rooted in service. Service requires humility. Humility requires internal security that is not dependent on position.
- 07** Identity anchored to calling holds the line. When pressure rises and compromise whispers, conviction is the only anchor that does not move.

CHAPTER 03

Identity Before Authority

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Separate your identity from your title.** Write two lists. The first: everything you are because of your position or role. The second: everything you are regardless of your position or role. The second list is your actual identity. Is it strong enough to stand on its own?

☐ **2. Name your current ethical anchors.** Write down three non-negotiables — principles you will not compromise regardless of financial pressure, social pressure, or organizational pressure. If you cannot name them quickly, that is important information.

☐ **3. Identify where you may be hiding damage.** Is there an area of your life — physical, relational, emotional, spiritual — where you are performing composure rather than living from wholeness? Name it honestly. Repair begins with acknowledgment.

CHAPTER 03

Identity Before Authority

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Examine a past compromise.** Think of a time when you allowed a standard to slip gradually under pressure. What was the first small rationalization? What followed? What would you do differently? Write it out. The pattern will repeat until it is examined.

☐ **5. Write your identity statement under God.** In three sentences, answer this: Who are you when the rank is gone, the title is removed, and no one is watching? Ground your answer in calling and conviction, not accomplishment. Read it when pressure mounts.

☐ **6. Find your Vince.** Who in your life has modeled identity without needing authority? Who demonstrated that the standard lives in the person, not the position? If you have that person, write them a note this week. If you do not, begin looking for that kind of mentor deliberately.

CHAPTER 04

Walking Into the Fire

Takeaways

- 01** Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the decision to move toward responsibility when stepping back would be easier.
- 02** Walking into the fire means refusing to separate yourself from the risk you ask others to bear. Presence is not optional for leaders.
- 03** Authority does not grant insulation. The higher the position, the greater the obligation to stand where it is difficult.
- 04** Prudence and retreat are not the same thing. Fear frequently disguises itself as caution. Leaders must know the difference.
- 05** Moral courage requires more sustained endurance than physical courage. Physical danger is immediate. Moral compromise is gradual and quiet.
- 06** Leaders who avoid moral responsibility lose integrity. That loss compounds over time in ways that cannot be recovered quickly.
- 07** Faithfulness, not fearlessness, is the standard. You do not need to feel ready. You need to remain committed to what you said you stood for.

CHAPTER 04

Walking Into the Fire

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Name the fire in front of you.** What situation in your life or leadership currently requires you to step toward it rather than away from it? Write it down specifically. Naming it removes the power it gains from being avoided.

☐ **2. Separate prudence from retreat.** For the situation you named, write two columns. Legitimate reasons to pause. Reasons that are actually fear in disguise. Be ruthlessly honest. The second column is where courage is required.

☐ **3. Identify a moral fire you have been avoiding.** Physical risk is obvious. Moral risk is quieter. Is there a conversation you have been postponing? A standard you have been letting slide? A truth you have been softening? Write it down and set a date to address it.

CHAPTER 04

Walking Into the Fire

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Recall a moment you walked into the fire.** Think of a time you chose the harder right when the easier wrong was available. What did it cost you? What did it protect? What did you learn about yourself? Write three sentences about it. That memory is a resource.

☐ **5. Define your faithfulness standard.** In two sentences, write what you are committed to regardless of the cost. Not what you hope to do. What you have decided. Read it before any high-pressure situation this week.

☐ **6. Find one person to walk with.** MG Batiste did not just tell Michael to go back out. He went with him. Who in your life is willing to walk into difficulty alongside you? If you do not have that person, that is the first gap to close.

CHAPTER 05

Influence Without Rank: Leading From the Middle

Takeaways

- 01** Leadership from the middle is often harder than command. At the top, authority forces movement. In the middle, influence must earn it.
- 02** You lead from the middle by becoming trustworthy in every direction. Across to peers, down to your team, and up to senior leaders.
- 03** Insecurity above you does not change your standard. You do not become more principled because others become less political. You decide who you are going to be before the pressure arrives.
- 04** Absorbing weight without transferring panic is the core responsibility of the middle leader. You translate pressure into clarity rather than passing it downward.
- 05** Leading up is not compliance. It is disciplined stewardship upward. Strong leaders above you need truth, not flattery.
- 06** Peer leadership exposes motive. Mission-focused leaders help their peers win. Insecure leaders compete unnecessarily.
- 07** The middle is a proving ground, not a waiting room. Leaders who carry responsibility well before they have authority carry authority well when it finally comes.

CHAPTER 05

Influence Without Rank: Leading From the Middle

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Map your three directions.** Write the names of the key people you currently lead across, down, and up. For each direction ask honestly: Am I being trustworthy, clear, and mission-focused in that relationship right now? Where is the weakest link?

☐ **2. Identify where you are waiting instead of leading.** Is there an area where you have been holding back, waiting for a title, a promotion, or formal recognition before you lead fully? Name it. Then decide what leading without that permission would look like starting this week.

☐ **3. Examine your response to insecurity above you.** Think of a senior leader whose behavior has been shaped by insecurity or political pressure. Have you responded with ego, resentment, or withdrawal? Write down what a disciplined, mission-focused response would look like instead.

CHAPTER 05

Influence Without Rank: Leading From the Middle

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Audit how you handle pressure downward.** When pressure comes from above, what happens to the people below you? Do you absorb it or transfer it? Ask someone on your team this week how they experience pressure when it flows through you. Their answer will tell you more than your own assessment.

☐ **5. Define what leading across looks like for you right now.** Name one peer relationship where you could add more value, share more information, or offer more honest support. What is one specific action you can take this week to strengthen that relationship without any personal agenda attached?

☐ **6. Write your middle leadership standard.** In three sentences, define how you intend to lead regardless of your title, the behavior of those above you, or the recognition you receive. Read it when the environment around you becomes political, toxic, or discouraging.

CHAPTER 06

Proximity and Scale

Takeaways

- 01** Proximity is a deliberate leadership decision. Who you consistently sit near shapes how you think, what you believe is normal, and what you become over time.
- 02** Leaders plateau because of lack of exposure, not lack of ability. Surrounding yourself with people who see further than you do is not weakness. It is wisdom.
- 03** Vertical development must precede horizontal influence. Internal depth, wisdom, discernment, and moral clarity must be built before external reach is expanded.
- 04** Experience teaches what happened. Study teaches why. Leaders who understand why can lead in environments they have never been in before because principles transfer even when context changes.
- 05** The thousand-year question changes your altitude. When you think in generations rather than quarters, ego shrinks, urgency clarifies, and the decisions that actually matter become obvious.
- 06** Scale without depth becomes noise. Influence that grows faster than character will eventually collapse under its own instability.
- 07** The purpose of greater rooms is not to prove worth. It is to increase capacity for stewardship. Humility is what makes proximity productive.

CHAPTER 06

Proximity and Scale

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Audit your current rooms.** Write down the five people you spend the most time with professionally. Are they sharpening you or confirming you? Are they challenging your thinking or simply agreeing with it? What does that tell you about where you are heading?

☐ **2. Identify the room you have been avoiding.** Is there a level of study, a relationship, a community, or an environment that would stretch you but that you have been putting off? Name it specifically. What is the real reason you have not stepped into it yet?

☐ **3. Assess your vertical versus horizontal balance.** On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your current investment in internal depth compared to external reach? Where is the gap? What is one concrete step toward vertical development you could take in the next thirty days?

CHAPTER 06

Proximity and Scale

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Sit with the thousand-year question.** Set aside twenty minutes this week with no phone and no noise. Write your answer to this question: What would change about my decisions if I were building a thousand-year blueprint? Do not rush it. Let it surface what it needs to surface.

☐ **5. Find one room to step into this quarter.** Identify one specific environment, relationship, course, or community that would place you near people who think at a higher level than your current circle. Make a concrete plan to enter it within the next ninety days.

☐ **6. Write the legacy statement.** In three to four sentences, describe what you want to have built by the time your season of leadership concludes. Not what you want to have accomplished for yourself. What you want to have multiplied through others. That statement becomes a filter for every major decision going forward.

CHAPTER 07

Culture: What Right Looks Like

Takeaways

- 01** Culture is not accidental. It is constructed or neglected. Every leader is either intentionally shaping culture or passively allowing it to drift.
- 02** Culture is what people do when you are not in the room. It is defined by what is tolerated, modeled, rewarded, and corrected.
- 03** Communication is culture. Vague communication creates confused culture. Inconsistent communication creates unstable culture. Disciplined communication creates clarity and trust.
- 04** You are either the thermometer or the thermostat. A thermometer reflects the environment. A thermostat sets it. Leaders set the temperature.
- 05** Ethical erosion begins with small rationalizations, not dramatic failures. Culture shifts subtly before it collapses visibly.
- 06** Pressure reveals culture. How an organization responds to financial strain, accelerated growth, and mistakes tells you everything about its actual values.
- 07** Structure often enables compassion to work. Clear standards allow people to operate with both discipline and conviction rather than in confusion.

CHAPTER 07

Culture: What Right Looks Like

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Define what right looks like in your organization.** Write three to five behavioral standards that describe how people in your organization are expected to operate regardless of pressure or circumstance. If you cannot name them quickly, that is the first gap to close.

☐ **2. Audit what you are tolerating.** Think honestly about the behaviors, patterns, or standards in your organization that you have been allowing to slide. Each one is a quiet culture statement. Write them down and decide which ones require a direct conversation this week.

☐ **3. Assess your communication.** Review the last three significant communications you delivered to your team. Were they clear, transparent, honest, and disciplined? Where did they fall short? What would you do differently?

CHAPTER 07

Culture: What Right Looks Like

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Identify where you are the thermometer instead of the thermostat.** Is there an environment, a relationship, or a recurring situation where you find yourself reflecting the emotional temperature of the room rather than setting it? Name it specifically and decide how you will respond differently next time.

☐ **5. Find one place where ethical clarity is needed.** Is there a gray area in your organization that has gone unaddressed? A standard that has been quietly lowered? A conversation that has been postponed? Commit to addressing it this week with clarity and respect.

☐ **6. Build one culture habit this month.** Choose one specific, repeatable behavior you will model consistently for the next thirty days. It could be how you open a meeting, how you respond to a mistake, or how you communicate a difficult decision. Do it the same way every time. Consistency is how culture is built.

CHAPTER 08

Strength With Compassion

Takeaways

- 01** Strength and compassion are not opposites. Leaders who treat them as competing values will either become rigid and disconnected or soft and unaccountable. The goal is both.
- 02** People carry circumstances you cannot see. Every person you lead is navigating pressures, burdens, and realities that rarely surface in the workplace. Good leaders recognize that and lead accordingly.
- 03** Rigid leadership says come back when you are ready. Compassionate leadership asks how we can help you become ready. One closes doors. The other opens them.
- 04** The 80 percent solution requires trust. No plan survives contact with reality unchanged. Leaders who cannot flex without losing their purpose will be outmaneuvered by the 20 percent they did not anticipate.
- 05** Compassion is not the absence of standards. It is remembering the purpose behind them. Structure exists to serve people, not the other way around.
- 06** Disciplined leadership adapts without losing purpose. Flexibility in execution is a strength. Flexibility in values is a fracture.
- 07** The goal of leadership is to steward people and accomplish meaningful outcomes. Structure creates order. Compassion creates trust. Together they create sustainable leadership.

CHAPTER 08

Strength With Compassion

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Identify someone on your team who is carrying more than you know.** Think about the people you lead. Is there someone whose performance or engagement has shifted recently? Instead of addressing it through a performance lens first, start with a genuine conversation. Ask how they are doing and mean it.

☐ **2. Find one place where rigid process is overriding human reality.** Is there a policy, a standard, or a system in your organization that is being applied without judgment? Write down whether there is a way to honor the intent of that standard while responding to the human situation in front of you.

☐ **3. Build your 80 percent culture.** Identify one area where you are requiring people to wait for your approval before they act. Ask honestly whether you have built enough trust and clarity for them to handle that 20 percent on their own. If not, what would it take to get there?

CHAPTER 08

Strength With Compassion

Action Items 4 to 6

- ☐ **4. Examine where you lead from rigidity rather than principle.** Think of a recent situation where you enforced a standard. Was it rooted in genuine conviction about what was right, or was it habit, comfort, or control? There is a difference and it matters to the people on the receiving end.
- ---

- ☐ **5. Look for a Sandee moment this week.** Is there someone in your world, a team member, a client, a colleague, who needs a creative solution rather than a standard response? What would it look like to approach their situation with both structure and compassion?
- ---

- ☐ **6. Write your leadership integration statement.** In three sentences describe how you intend to hold both strength and compassion together in your leadership. What does that look like in practice for you specifically? Read it when you are tempted to default to one at the expense of the other.
- ---

CHAPTER 09

Multiplication and the Thousand-Year Blueprint

Takeaways

01 The true test of leadership is not how well you perform. It is how well others perform because of you. Multiplication is the measure of legacy.

02 Leadership that does not reproduce becomes personality-dependent. Leadership that multiplies becomes generational.

03 Most leaders think tactically. Exponential leaders ask what they are building that will outlive them by generations. That question changes everything.

04 The body mirrors the time horizon of the mind. When the mind lives in urgency, the body lives in stress. When the mind lives in strategy, the body finds rhythm.

05 You do not multiply charisma. You multiply character. You do not multiply personality. You multiply principle.

06 Family is part of the blueprint. A thousand-year mindset integrates home and leadership rather than separating them.

07 Leadership that thinks tactically survives. Leadership that thinks exponentially endures. Endurance is the foundation of true legacy.

CHAPTER 09

Multiplication and the Thousand-Year Blueprint

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Sit with the thousand-year question.** Set aside twenty minutes this week with no phone and no interruptions. Write your honest answer to this question: What would change about my decisions if I were building a thousand-year blueprint? Do not rush it. Let it surface what it needs to surface.

☐ **2. Identify who you are currently multiplying.** Write down the names of two or three people you are intentionally developing. Not managing. Developing. If you cannot name them quickly, that is the first gap to close.

☐ **3. Assess your level of thinking.** Honestly evaluate where you spend most of your mental energy. Tactical, operational, strategic, or exponential. What would it look like to move one level higher in your daily decision-making?

CHAPTER 09

Multiplication and the Thousand-Year Blueprint

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Separate the urgent from the important.** Review your calendar and your task list from last week. How much of your time was spent on things that were urgent but not important? What would you have protected if you were thinking exponentially rather than reactively?

☐ **5. Write your generational legacy statement.** In three to four sentences describe what you want to have multiplied through others by the time your season of leadership concludes. Not what you want to have accomplished for yourself. What you want to have transferred. That statement becomes a filter for every major decision going forward.

☐ **6. Have one multiplication conversation this week.** Choose one person you are developing and have a deliberate conversation about why, not just what. Explain the principle behind the task. Teach the doctrine behind the decision. That is how multiplication begins.

CHAPTER 10

Resilience Under Emotional Weight

Takeaways

- 01** Resilience is not emotional suppression. Suppression buries grief until it resurfaces destructively. Resilience acknowledges grief while maintaining responsibility.
- 02** Stability is visible. In moments of emotional volatility, people instinctively search for grounding. Leaders carry that role whether they ask for it or not.
- 03** Character must anchor emotion. Values do not change because circumstances are painful. Discipline does not dissolve because the weight is personal.
- 04** Strength for others does not eliminate personal sorrow. Leaders must create private space to process grief honestly so it does not leak into the people who depend on them.
- 05** You do not rise to your aspirations under emotional weight. You fall to your discipline. Formation determines what remains when pressure is at its most personal.
- 06** Integrated resilience means your character is consistent across environments. Professional strength without personal steadiness is incomplete.
- 07** Resilience is endurance without collapse. It is often quiet, rarely applause-worthy, and always built before it is needed.

CHAPTER 10

Resilience Under Emotional Weight

Action Items 1 to 3

- ☐ **1. Identify your emotional regulation triggers.** What situations drain your emotional reserves most quickly? Conflict, uncertainty, grief, prolonged pressure? Name them specifically. You cannot manage what you have not identified.
- ---

- ☐ **2. Build your private processing practice.** Resilience requires a place where you can acknowledge what you are carrying honestly. Write down one specific practice, a prayer, a journal entry, a walk, a conversation with a trusted person, that you will use when emotional weight builds. Do not wait until the moment arrives to decide what that looks like.
- ---

- ☐ **3. Assess your consistency across environments.** Are you the same person at home that you are at work? Are you the same person under personal pressure that you are under professional pressure? Write down one area where your character is less consistent than you want it to be. That is where formation work is needed.
- ---

CHAPTER 10

Resilience Under Emotional Weight

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Recall a moment you carried weight for others.** Think of a time when someone depended on your stability during a difficult season. What did it cost you? What did you learn about yourself? Write three sentences about it. That memory is a resource for the next time the weight arrives.

☐ **5. Write your resilience standard.** In two to three sentences, define how you intend to carry emotional weight. Not how you hope to respond. How you have decided to respond. Read it during seasons of pressure before you need it in a crisis.

☐ **6. Check on someone who is carrying weight right now.** Resilience is not only a personal discipline. It is a gift leaders offer others. Think of one person in your life who is navigating grief, loss, or prolonged pressure. Reach out this week. Not with advice. With presence.

CHAPTER 11

Integrated Wholeness: Leading From a Unified Life

Takeaways

- 01** Fragmentation produces fatigue. Integration produces endurance. Leaders who operate in silos, faith here, discipline there, eventually exhaust the resources they are drawing from.
- 02** Spiritual alignment precedes activity. When you lead from submission to God rather than from your own strength, decisions change. Tone changes. Responses change.
- 03** Faith is the anchor, not the accessory. Without it, identity drifts toward performance and success becomes the measure of worth.
- 04** Physical stewardship is not vanity. It is leadership currency. A depleted body shortens patience, narrows clarity, and weakens discipline.
- 05** Burnout is caused by misalignment, not effort alone. When pace exceeds purpose and identity is tied to output, fracture follows.
- 06** Leaders who never disconnect eventually disconnect internally. Solitude, reflection, and intentional stillness are reinforcement, not retreat.
- 07** Sustainability is architected. You cannot build a legacy from a divided life. Integrated wholeness must be protected deliberately and consistently.

CHAPTER 11

Integrated Wholeness: Leading From a Unified Life

Action Items 1 to 3

- ☐ **1. Design your stillness practice.** Hot tub revelation works for Michael. What works for you? Identify one specific time, place, and practice where you will create intentional stillness each day. Write it down and protect it the way you would protect any other non-negotiable commitment.
- ---

- ☐ **2. Audit your four alignment areas.** Rate yourself honestly on a scale of one to ten in each area. Spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional. Where is the lowest score? That is where misalignment is most likely draining your leadership capacity right now.
- ---

- ☐ **3. Identify what you are carrying that was not assigned to you.** Sit quietly for ten minutes and ask honestly: what burdens am I carrying that are not mine to carry? Write them down. For each one, decide whether to act, release, or bring before God.
- ---

CHAPTER 11

Integrated Wholeness: Leading From a Unified Life

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Assess your physical discipline.** When did you last have a consistent physical routine? Sleep, movement, and nutrition are not peripheral habits. They are leadership infrastructure. Write down one specific change you will make to your physical discipline this week.

☐ **5. Find where your pace is exceeding your purpose.** Review your schedule from the past two weeks. Where are you moving fast without clarity about why? Identify one commitment, habit, or obligation that is consuming energy without contributing to your mission. What would it look like to eliminate or reduce it?

☐ **6. Write your integration statement.** In three to four sentences describe what a fully aligned day looks like for you. Not a perfect day. An aligned one. Spiritually anchored, physically disciplined, mentally focused, and emotionally honest. That description becomes your standard and your reset point when drift begins.

CHAPTER 12

Service Runs in the Bloodline

Takeaways

- 01** Service is not inherited automatically. It is chosen in every generation. The thread continues only when individuals make a personal decision to pick it up and carry it forward.
- 02** Discipline is modeled before it is taught. Children and young leaders absorb the standards they observe far more than the ones they are told about.
- 03** Conviction must run in the heart. Service that is driven only by obligation eventually fades. Service driven by conviction endures.
- 04** Expansion is not rebellion. Choosing a different path than those before you does not dishonor their legacy. It extends it.
- 05** Authority without conviction drifts. Leadership without faith eventually fractures. The anchor beneath the standard matters as much as the standard itself.
- 06** Legacy runs in both directions. It is shaped by those who came before you and carried forward by those who come after. Your role is to be a faithful link in that chain.
- 07** You can begin the bloodline. If no one before you modeled service, discipline, or conviction, you can be the one who starts it. That decision ripples further than you will ever see.

CHAPTER 12

Service Runs in the Bloodline

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Trace your own service thread.** Write down the people in your life, family or otherwise, who modeled service, discipline, or conviction before you. What did they pass down? What did you receive from them that you are now responsible to carry forward?

☐ **2. Identify what you are currently modeling.** Think about the young leaders, children, or team members who are watching you right now. What standard are they observing? What thread are you laying down for them to pick up?

☐ **3. Write your family leadership declaration.** In the spirit of Joshua’s declaration, write two to three sentences that define the standard you are establishing for your household. What does service, faith, and leadership look like in your home? Make it specific enough to hold yourself accountable to it.

CHAPTER 12

Service Runs in the Bloodline

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Name the next generation you are investing in.** Who is coming behind you? Write down one or two specific people, a child, a young employee, a mentee, whom you are deliberately developing. What is one concrete step you can take this week to invest in their formation?

☐ **5. Decide what thread you are starting or continuing.** If you come from a legacy of service, write down how you are extending it. If you are the first in your family to pursue this kind of leadership, write down what you want the generation after you to say about where it started. That statement is your declaration.

☐ **6. Anchor your service in conviction, not obligation.** Ask yourself honestly: why do I serve? Is it habit, expectation, or genuine conviction? Write your answer. If the answer is not yet rooted in something deeper than obligation, that is worth examining before you lead another generation into it.

CHAPTER 13

Small Hinges, Big Doors

Takeaways

- 01** The biggest victories rarely come from grand gestures. They come from consistent, deliberate decisions made when no one is watching. Small hinges open big doors.
- 02** Leadership influence rarely appears dramatic in the moment. The conversations, the standards, the disciplines that seem ordinary are the very things that open extraordinary doors over time.
- 03** You can be present without being physically present. Intentional, consistent connection across distance still installs hinges in the people you love.
- 04** Fatherhood and leadership are built the same way. Through daily discipline, one small decision at a time. The unseen work shapes the visible outcome.
- 05** Traditions rooted in love, character, and discipline become generational hinges. What you establish today can travel further than you will ever see.
- 06** Growth is never meant to remain a private victory. If you keep getting better, you have a responsibility to help someone else get better too.
- 07** Stop waiting for a grand gesture. Find the hinge. Choose one small act of excellence you can repeat until it becomes part of who you are.

CHAPTER 13

Small Hinges, Big Doors

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Identify your current daily hinges.** Write down three to five things you do consistently, whether anyone sees them or not, that are building toward something larger. If you cannot name them quickly, that is the first gap to close.

☐ **2. Find the hinge you have been neglecting.** Is there one discipline, one conversation, one standard, or one practice that you know matters but that you have been skipping? Name it. Commit to reinstalling it this week.

☐ **3. Create one intentional connection practice.** Think about a person you love or lead who needs your presence even when you cannot be physically available. Write down one specific, repeatable way you will stay intentionally connected. Then do it consistently long enough for it to become a tradition.

CHAPTER 13

Small Hinges, Big Doors

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Write a letter.** Not an email. Not a text. A handwritten letter to someone who needs to hear that you are proud of them, that you see them, and that you believe in who they are becoming. Send it this week. That is a hinge.

☐ **5. Reflect on the hinges others installed in you.** Think about the small, consistent decisions someone made on your behalf, a parent, a mentor, a coach, a leader, that opened doors in your life. Write down two or three of those hinges. Then ask yourself: am I installing that same kind of hinge for someone else right now?

☐ **6. Define your one repeatable act of excellence.** Choose one specific discipline you will practice every day for the next thirty days regardless of how you feel, how busy you are, or whether anyone notices. Write it down. That is your hinge. Stay faithful to it.

CHAPTER 14

The Homecoming: Becoming and Passing It On

Takeaways

- 01** You never stop becoming. Leadership development does not end with promotion, experience, or success. It ends only when leaders stop learning.
- 02** Freedom is not the absence of discipline. It is discipline aimed at the right target. Refusing to let comfort, approval, or fear shrink who God is shaping you to become is an act of courage.
- 03** Breakthrough is not only for you. The lesson becomes a responsibility. The clarity you gain in difficulty is meant to be passed forward.
- 04** Self-improvement without multiplication eventually stalls. When you commit to both sharpening yourself and sharpening others, you create a culture that outlasts you.
- 05** Leadership endurance requires alignment. Faith, reflection, physical discipline, and continued learning are not optional habits. They are the infrastructure of sustained leadership.
- 06** The strongest leaders remain students. They surround themselves with people who challenge their thinking and they never mistake experience for the end of growth.
- 07** Leadership is proven by the leaders who stand stronger because you invested in them. Legacy is not what you accomplished. It is what you multiplied.

CHAPTER 14

The Homecoming: Becoming and Passing It On

Action Items 1 to 3

☐ **1. Ask yourself honestly: am I still becoming?** Write down the last book you read intentionally, the last environment you entered to be sharpened, and the last time you sought counsel from someone who thinks differently than you do. If those answers are distant, that is the first thing to address.

☐ **2. Identify where you have been shrinking.** Is there an area of your leadership, your business, your family, or your faith where you have been conforming to pressure rather than leading from conviction? Name it. Write down what leading from conviction would look like in that area instead.

☐ **3. Define your becoming practice.** Write down one specific commitment to continued growth. A course, a mentor relationship, a reading discipline, a community you will join. Make it concrete and give it a start date.

CHAPTER 14

The Homecoming: Becoming and Passing It On

Action Items 4 to 6

☐ **4. Find your Justin Nelson.** Who in your life can you send a message to at midnight when something significant shifts inside you? If you do not have that person, that relationship is worth pursuing deliberately. Leaders need people who will receive their breakthroughs and hold them accountable to living them out.

☐ **5. Name who you are passing it on to.** Write down one or two specific people you are currently investing in. Not managing. Not delegating to. Investing in. What are you teaching them? What are you modeling? What do you want them to carry forward?

☐ **6. Write your homecoming declaration.** In three to four sentences describe who you are without the box someone else built for you. Not your title. Not your role. Not someone else's definition of acceptable. Who did God make you to be and what are you committed to building with that? Read it when pressure tempts you to shrink again.

CHAPTER 15

Letters to Leaders

Takeaways

Adapted from Letters to Leaders

- 01** Leadership is stewardship. Responsibility for people and decisions deserves presence, clarity, and discipline.
- 02** You do not need a title, rank, or authority to begin developing discipline and character.
- 03** Character precedes command. Ethics precede opportunity. Integration precedes endurance.
- 04** Leadership is formed over time through responsibility, pressure, faith, and discipline.
- 05** Legacy is what you transfer. Knowledge and wisdom must be shared to continue through others.
- 06** Keep sharpening yourself while training the next generation. Leadership grows when it is multiplied.
- 07** The measure of leadership is whether what you know, believe, and practice continues through others.

CHAPTER 15

Letters to Leaders

Action Items 1 to 3

Adapted from Letters to Leaders

☐ **1. Name the responsibility you carry.** Write down the people and decisions entrusted to you. Identify one situation this week where you will choose presence, clarity, or discipline.

☐ **2. Begin where you are.** Choose one daily practice to strengthen your tone, mind, faith, or physical discipline. Write when and where you will practice it.

☐ **3. Build depth before expanding reach.** Identify one area of character, ethics, or personal alignment that needs attention. Name one step you will take and the person who can help you follow through.

CHAPTER 15

Letters to Leaders

Action Items 4 to 6

Adapted from Letters to Leaders

☐ **4. Pass down a lesson.** Choose one person who could benefit from something you have learned. Write the lesson and schedule time to teach both the practice and the principle behind it.

☐ **5. Prepare the mission to continue.** Identify one responsibility that currently depends on you. Write who you will develop to carry it forward and what knowledge or judgment you need to transfer.

☐ **6. Write your letter to a future leader.** Describe what you believe, what you have learned, and what you hope they will carry forward. Include one commitment to keep learning while helping them grow.
