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**COURAGE**

— TO —

**LEAD**



Marsha M Mansour

# Endorsements

I have known Pastor Marsha Mansour for over twenty years now. I have worked side by side with her in ministry and have witnessed her gift of leadership at work. She has the unique ability to love people as Jesus did, full of grace and truth. Marsha knows when to lead people in grace and mercy and when to speak and stand for the truth in love. This leadership style is not a science that is gained from a theological education but is an art mastered through life experience in the trenches with people. I highly recommend this book because of the depth of leadership experience and wisdom that personifies the author. May the Lord open the eyes of your heart to see leading like Jesus in a new, profound way.

—Walter E Nistorenko

Lead Pastor, Abundant Life Church, Seville, NJ  
Presbyter (Southern Section of the NJ Ministry Network)

Marsha Mansour has certainly been a living example of courage in her personal and ministry life. She walks in boldness and faith in every area! In her first book, *The Courage to Live*, she speaks confidence to the reader to live and walk with courage. Marsha is a born leader, and those skills are exemplified in the way she leads people by walking with them and leaves them

wanting more. From the moment you meet her, you know that she is all about Jesus and building the Kingdom His way. There are so many leaders who know the principles of leadership but have difficulty carrying them out. Marsha not only knows the principles, but she lives them as well. *The Courage to Lead* is a leadership must-read!

—Nancy Tonnessen

Pastor of Deaf Ministries at Evangel Church, Scotch Plains, NJ  
Secretary for the National Deaf Culture Fellowship  
(Assemblies of God)

Some leaders are worth only a dime a dozen. That's a sad commentary! Too many lack expertise, experience, and passion. Marsha Mansour lives in contrast to the pack of ordinary or mediocre leaders. She has worked hard to develop her leadership skills, has a good track of experience, and attacks both life and ministry with a radical passion! When Marsha enters the room, you know she is present, and when she leaves, there is a definite vacuum. She is a unique leader, and her words are dependable. Enjoy the energy of her presentation as displayed within the cover of this, her latest book!

—Rev. Carl Colletti

Assemblies of God New Jersey District Superintendent,  
1998–2018

Leadership requires courage. Marsha's life and ministry has embodied this principle. I have had a front-row seat to witness her courageous leadership in action over the last eleven years. The greatest testament of Marsha's leadership is found in those she has personally influenced and mentored. She creates leaders who create leaders. You will be blessed by the principles and insights in this book. They come from a lifetime of learning in the trenches and trials of ministry. May this book help you to become the leader God has called and created you to be.

—Chris Morante

Senior Pastor, Evangel Church, Scotch Plains, NJ

John Kotter, in his book *What Leaders Really Do*, wrote that "I am completely convinced that most organizations today lack the leadership they need." I wonder if some of that is true because those same organizations overlook female leaders like Marsha Mansour. Marsha has proven to be a beyond-her-years wise leader. She is a refreshingly candid female spiritual leader. Her accomplishments speak for themselves. The body of Christ needs more leaders like her. She and Deborah, the biblical judge, would make a great pair. I am deeply proud of her and thank God for her life and giftedness.

—Frank Reitzel Jr.

Executive Secretary, the New Jersey District Council of the  
Assemblies of God



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Marsha M Mansour

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# Foreword

**THERE ARE LEADERS, AND** then there are dynamic leaders. Marsha Mansour is a dynamic leader.

Marsha doesn't just release others into life and leadership—she launches them! By inspiring others to live out their full potential, Marsha relentlessly speaks the truth in love. She demonstrates her authenticity, genuinely caring for people's hearts and spiritually mothering many.

Marsha's dynamic leadership has been forged in times of obscurity, submitting to challenging seasons. She obeys when it's not popular or easy. Life experiences have given Marsha the unique ability to speak from deep wells of wisdom paired with scriptural insights. She lives out the biblical principle of honor.

Marsha leaves an indelible mark on everyone with whom she comes in contact. I'm honored to know her as a person, pastor, and even more, as my friend.

—Pastor Stephanie Martinez,  
President of Heart Exposed Music



# Introduction

**WHEN WE THINK OF** leadership, what is the first thing that comes to our minds? Character qualities? An exceptional leadership quote? Maybe we think of the church or organization we are in charge of. When I think of leadership, I think of courage. Yes, courage. Great leadership requires great courage! Joshua 1:9 is by far one of my favorite Bible verses and one of the most quoted. It speaks right to a heart of a leader and gives the core value needed to lead and lead well: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

I love the spirit of Joshua. I love the heart of Joshua. And so in Joshua chapter 1, God is instructing Joshua on how to lead the people of Israel. Moses has died, and He’s preparing Joshua now to be his successor. He instructs how they will take the Promised Land. (Remember, Moses led them to the border, but he didn’t lead them all the way in; Joshua was the one who brought Israel into the Promised Land.)

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Moses did not have an easy job with Israel! They fought him every step. As a matter of fact, they had already reached the Promised Land forty years prior but did not have the courage to take it! Only Joshua and his buddy Caleb truly believed in and were willing to fight for the promises of God. It was for this reason they wandered for forty years. Moses had to lead a stubborn, rebellious, and fearful people until they either became the men and women God had called them to be, or they died off! What a leadership school for Joshua to learn from as he watched the good, the bad, and the ugly. He learned what to do from Moses and more importantly what not to do! Good leaders look for opportunities to learn from both the right things and the wrong. Not all mentoring happens by watching good leadership. Sometimes watching leaders' mistakes teaches us in greater ways.

Now Moses has died, and Joshua has to take all he has learned and apply it to lead five million people into the will of God. That's a pretty tall task.

As they were coming up to Joshua's first steps as their new leader, they ironically came back to the same spot where they failed before. However, this time God starts them off with the missing ingredient that cost them the Promised Land the first time: courage! The Lord starts off the chapter by saying, "Joshua be strong, and be of good courage. I'm going to give you every place where you put your foot. Don't move from the left to the right. Keep the law I've put in front of you. Walk strong. Meditate on it; you'll prosper. Just keep my word in your heart." And then He tells him again, "Be strong and of

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good courage. I'm going to be with you; I'm not going to leave you. I'll never forsake you."

God keeps giving Joshua more and more instructions, and in verse 9 we come to the verse I want to talk about. Joshua 1:9 says, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong. Be of good courage. Do not be dismayed, do not be afraid for the Lord your God will go with you wherever you go." It's interesting that the Lord says to Joshua three times, "Be strong, be of good courage." But the third time, He adds this sentence before it: "Have I not commanded you?" We don't talk about that verse a lot, but the Lord is actually giving him a command. He must be strong and of good courage. It wasn't an option. It wasn't a choice. If he was going to be the leader God called him to be, and if he was going to lead Israel through the things God had for them, strength and courage weren't an option. They were a command.

Today, any true, godly leader must possess courage. I have been in leadership for more years than I want to say, and I face situations, issues, and decisions weekly that require enormous amounts of courage to navigate. Leadership is not for the faint of heart, because it requires courage, and too often leaders take the easy way out. They would rather take a let's-see-what-will-happen approach. Friend, that is not leadership. Leadership makes bold, God-decisions with the trust and confidence that the Lord empowers them. They do the God thing no matter what and inspire those they are leading to do the same.

Leader, anything you want to accomplish for God, any place you want to lead people, if you want to be who Jesus has called you to be as a believer and as a leader, being strong and



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being courageous are not options. You must be strong and of good courage. He has commanded you to be these things, and the reason you can be strong and the reason you can have courage is the line right after: “Don’t be afraid, don’t be dismayed because the Lord God will go with you wherever you go.”

Leader, remember that you never walk alone. You might feel alone, but that’s a lie from the Enemy. You are never alone. The Lord Jesus walks with you every moment and every day. And so because He walks with you, you don’t have to be afraid. You don’t have to be dismayed. You can be strong. You can be courageous. Leadership can be lonely, but don’t mistake the lonely times with being alone. Making courageous decisions will set you apart and give you some time by yourself, but the Lord is always with the man or woman of God as they lead for Him.

My heart in writing this book is to ignite and infuse the hearts of leaders with courage! It is time for strong, godly, Spirit-led leadership. I truly believe that courage is a position of the heart, and so you will find this book dealing with the heart and principles of leaders more than simply a how-to book. I want to walk us through principles that can govern our hearts and help us lead with confidence. I have watched too many leaders burn out or fail simply because they don’t have governing principles to guard them. My prayer is to come alongside leaders and empower them for longevity and godly success!

As you prepare to read and study this book, I want to remind you that God Himself commands you to be strong and be courageous. So do that today, leader. Do it this week. Do it always! Remind yourself: Has He not commanded me to be

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strong and of good courage? Has He told me not to be afraid and not to be dismayed because He's going to be with me wherever I go? What land do you need to possess? What things do you need to walk around? What Jerichos do you need to walk around and take authority over? What do you need strength for this week? This year? Command yourself. You know, then you need to declare, "God has given me a mandate, and I'm going to take it. I'm going to be strong and of good courage. I'm not going to be afraid. I'm not going to be dismayed because the Lord God is going to go with me wherever I go. I never walk alone."

I want you to be the leader God has called you to be. Be strong and of good courage, child of God. Possess the land in front of you. Walk in victory. Walk in everything God has for you. Do not be afraid. Do not be dismayed, for the Lord goes with you everywhere you go. And most importantly, lead others around you to do the same!

His servant,

Rev. Marsha Mansour



## CHAPTER ONE



# Building the Kingdom System by System

**BUILDING THE KINGDOM GOD** has called us to as leaders is important because we don't just want to build quickly—we want to build well. So many times, though, when building something fresh, new, and exciting, we try to build too quickly, and that doesn't seem to work as well. That may suit cities and towns with booming subdivisions where homes are built quickly so people moving into the area can have a place to live. That may be fine for cities and towns to erect massive structures for the next greatest restaurant or department store to appeal to the masses. But it doesn't work as well for leaders in building their churches, because a church built for the Kingdom should be long lasting and produce great fruit. As leaders, like those who build cities and towns, we want to build our work quickly because we want fruit, we want people to fill our churches, we may want financial gain, or we simply want to be successful. But these desires are real errors, and they are

not the reason to build the Kingdom. We build the Kingdom for God's glory only. And because of that, we need to build the Kingdom well and build it system by system. Often, the enemy to building well is building quickly.

### **Building the Kingdom System by System**

Building the Kingdom system by system is like building a tower of blocks with all sorts of sizes. If we place the smallest blocks as the foundation, the tower will topple. But if we put the biggest and strongest block at the foundation and work our way up, then we will have a bulwark. The way to build well is system by system. Building well involves systems that are both sustainable and reproducible. *Sustainable* and *reproducible* are terms that leaders must understand well and model in their leadership. Let's break down these terms so we can understand together.

**Sustainable:** The dictionary definition of *sustainable* is anything that relates to a consistent method. A sustainable system moves easily and moves without you, the leader, needing to be present. A sustainable system involves a few factors. The first factor is that the system is not built around the leader or around a personality but is built so that it makes sense. Anyone can walk into the system and figure out how it works because it's clear and concise with steps to follow or instructions for troubleshooting. Any leader can step in and figure out how to make things work because the system doesn't require specific people to run things. That's a sustainable ministry, and that's what you want. The second factor is that a system should be able to run long-term; that's what *sustainable* means. If the

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ministry fizzles the year after I leave, that means I didn't make it sustainable. A sustainable system should have a long-term effect, and the ministry should be able to last for a long time; it shouldn't fizzle once a key person walks out of it. It should be easy to learn. A ministry should be so sustainable that it can also be reproduced by anyone else who comes after you.

**Reproducible:** Something is *reproducible* if it can be reproduced or copied. What does that mean for leaders? Anyone who works under you should be able to reproduce what you're doing; therefore, you must create a reproducible system. Your reproducible formula is a system that can be planted anywhere you go.

### Putting the System into Practice

I get the privilege every year of running a Vacation Bible School at my church. We run Vacation Bible School for about eight hundred children and three hundred leaders. Both sustainable and reproducible systems exist within my VBS because it can operate without me. The system is clear, the methodology is clear, and the steps are obvious to those who are watching. No one has to struggle to figure out my system; it's sustainable. We have a system where the children move in modules every twenty minutes. What that means is crafts, recreation, and the lesson time all happen at the same time. For example, fourth grade will be in crafts, third grade will be in lesson time, and in twenty minutes, they switch. That allows me to have a high number of children and high excitement with lower chances of children getting bored. Also, the team is invested the whole time.

This type of system is also reproducible because I've taken our VBS system and used it all around the world: the same

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system, the same module schedule, the same way of building up leaders and coordinators and setting up responsibilities. It is reproducible. I have taken it to Africa, India, and Mexico, and we've used it in all our neighboring cities. We've done something called VBS Outside Our Borders where we take our Vacation Bible School, find a church that can't do Vacation Bible School the way we do, and we empower that church so that their system becomes reproducible. We get to watch those churches continue to build what we've taught them. It's reproducible, and it becomes easy because there is always something moving ahead.

The system is always able to be moved and reproduced. A key way to truly do that is to always have someone coming up underneath you. Someone should always be training underneath you. If everything lives and dies with you as a leader, you are now the cap for that ministry. You've created its own blockage. It won't grow past you. But if you're constantly reproducing yourself and constantly training, giving responsibility to, and releasing people into the ministry, then you're constantly reproducing the ministry, ensuring that the ministry won't have a cap. Without a cap, your ministry will grow strong, fertile, and with many, many branches. So it's key that as you're building, the ministry is a sustainable and reproducible system that includes training others under you even though this means that you are essentially building yourself out of a job.

### **Building Yourself out of a Job**

If you are building your church or ministry properly, you are truly building yourself right out of a job. Now before you

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are alarmed, let me say that it's actually a good thing because that's what a sustainable, reproducible ministry does. It builds the leader out of the job because if he or she is constantly empowering, releasing, and giving responsibilities to others that cause the ministry to be reproduced, the system and the ministry will carry forward even though the leader becomes obsolete. That's really how you want to build a ministry.

I know for many leaders that's scary because you may be thinking, if I build myself out of a job, then what do I do? Well, when you build yourself out of your job, God gives you more ministry, and then it works like a wheel. As you release people to where God has called them, create sustainable and reproducible ministries, and build yourself out of a job, God can then give you more. God can put more ministry into your hands because you've proven trustworthy in building His house. Reproducible systems allow us to be better leaders and build with longevity. When we don't build with these ideals and we allow the needs of the ministry to dictate how we build, we run the risk of building what I call one-hit wonders.

### **Don't Live on One-Hit Wonders**

As we have seen, systems are really, really important. Another incredibly important reason is that they help protect our teams from burnout and frustration. At the first sight of success in our ministry, we run into the risk of thinking we're exclusive to building our ministry. Ministries that have high turnover rates usually operate with poor systems and with a leader who thinks they are exclusive to its success. Poor systems put us in the one-hit wonder world. What is a one-hit wonder? One-hit



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wonders are event-driven ministries. If an event is coming up, the leader thinks they have to make the event work. They get the job done but without counting the cost. It is run at a hundred miles an hour, get it done, and figure out the issues later. That's called a one-hit wonder.

Don't think because you got the job done for one event that you actually have a system that works. That only means you're good at putting things together at the last minute. Rather, ministry we do for the Lord should be excellent and shouldn't be a series of one-hit wonders. It shouldn't be something that I throw together and make happen, and because it looks good, think I have a working system.

You never want to operate on a system that is pieced together. You always want to operate from a system that exists and works well, so that each time an event comes up, it doesn't overwhelm you or your team. You have systems in place so that each time an event comes up, it just falls into the filter of the system, and it works. But if you have to recreate the system each single time, something is wrong with your system. If you have poor systems, you will never gain quality leaders or have longevity in what you are building.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to ensure your system works or to gauge how to do it differently: Was what I did excellent? Was it done in a timely manner? Was it done with the right preparation? Could someone else do it if I was away? Answering those questions will tell you if the system you have in place works so all can understand it.

### **Understand How Systems Work**

It is important to understand that systems are driven by principles. Because it is impossible to give a system for every single scenario, you have to build your system around overarching principles. For example, if you're a leader of the children's ministry, one of your key overarching principles is safety. Now your systems are built around safety. Another key principle in your system can be structure. If you're running assimilation, what is your key principle? Your key principle is that people feel connected. These kinds of principles now govern the systems you build. Those are systems that work because once your team understands the root of the principle, the system now makes sense. Conversely, if a system is arbitrary, it's up in the air and doesn't have a root or principle behind it, then the system becomes flexible and movable because people don't understand the root of it. But if you create a system that's built around safety, as I do for our children's ministry, then the team understands everything that operates out of it. They inadvertently say, "Oh, she's doing this because of safety," and it's no longer my own principle because it now becomes the team's principle. Root principles are crucial when you're building systems. Why? So people can understand your system and the vision behind why you do what you do.

### **Vision behind Building a Proper System**

When you build proper systems that are principle-rooted, it gives you a platform of vision that allows workers (future leaders) to come alongside you and help build what God has called you to build. We have watched God reproduce the

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Vacation Bible School I spoke of all over New Jersey and New York. From that one VBS, we are able to feed ten to twelve other Vacation Bible Schools just in our area, not counting the four or five Vacation Bible Schools we do each year around the world. We've done them in Guatemala. We've done them all over the place. Why? Because we have a system in place where people have bought into the vision of VBS. The principle purpose of VBS is letting children fall in love with Jesus. I don't have workers—I have leaders who help facilitate that experience for the children and then from there, we see great and mighty things.

As a leader, if you sell work, labor, or a need, you only end up with workers. People will come because you have a need. But if you sell vision you'll end up with leaders because vision drives any ministry. Therefore, if people understand the vision behind your systems, why you do them the way you do, then you're going to end up with leaders who not only do what you do but build on what you do and make it better. If you sell work or labor, yes, they'll come, and they'll serve because people are good, and they want to serve, but you'll never end up with leaders. But if you saying things like, "We want to build a church where our children can fall in love with Jesus, learn the Word of God, and grow in the things of the Spirit. I need people who are going to help me create a place where God can meet these children with His love and change their lives forever," you will end up with leaders, not workers, because leaders respond to vision. Leaders must have vision to build systems.

In one of the children's ministries I had the honor of building, the church had wonderful children's workers but no real

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leaders. I quickly learned why. They would recruit by saying things like, “Come help us with the children’s ministry; we need help.” So they got beautiful workers but no leaders. I had to flip all that on its ear. We started recruiting by saying things like, “Do you want to be part of leading this generation to Jesus? Do you want to be part of a team that gets to pour life into amazing children?” Quickly, we started seeing leaders sign up left and right. We were speaking their language, and they were responding. Within a few short years we had tons of leaders and could build on their backs ever more ministry. Always drive with vision.

### **Problems When Building a System**

When you’re building systems, there are some potential problems to look out for. Sometimes you may build too many layers around a certain system. When you make something super layered, the system doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. Be careful about how many layers you have. You want to layer the system just enough so that it is safe, and it makes sense. Three key questions to ask yourself are: Is it sustainable? Is it reproducible? Can people understand it?

Let’s discuss a few potential problems with too many layers and how to fix them. If it takes fifteen steps to baptize someone, it’s layered too much. If it takes twenty-two steps to work in the children’s ministry, something is wrong. If it takes five steps to work in the youth ministry, that’s just about right. Each system should have clear, easy steps to follow. Each system should be layered just enough so that people can succeed in what they’re called. Anything more than what is absolutely necessary for the

particular system you're trying to put in place, and you've layered it too much. People have very busy lives, we have to make sure we can stick to our principles but also create great systems so that people can step into ministry and do it with all their hearts. We also have to create systems that are simple enough to understand but complicated enough to care for the ministries we've been trusted with. It's a dance, I know, but learning to layer just enough is something that'll make your ministry greatly succeed.

### **Keys for Building a Successful Ministry**

To build a sustainable, reproducible ministry, a few keys are needed. But two are essential, and we must remember them in order to build a successful ministry. First, we must remember that we are building people. Sometimes pastors and leaders look at people as merely tools to make things work, or make the ministry a success, and that's a huge mistake. The people under you are to be valued and cared for by you as their leader. Many leaders are singularly minded at getting a task done, and they forget that people matter much more than the task. I have often seen leaders burn out those who work for them. The task is never more important than the people. We must always have a pulse on those who work for us and do our best to care for them. When they feel loved and cared for, everything works better.

Second, there's a key statement I believe is necessary for all leaders to live by. I actually got this quote from the movie, *Patriot*. In one of the scenes, the lead character is teaching his sons how to shoot a gun. He says, "How has Daddy taught you

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to shoot a gun?” The boys look at their dad and say, “Aim small, miss small.” For me, as a leader, that’s the way I build people. Our goal is to bring people under us who show potential and give them little opportunities to build ministry. Aim small so that if they miss, they miss small—if you give them a target too big to handle, you’ve set them up for failure. Aim small, miss small, and as they prove faithful and that they really do have ability and talent, then you can assess what they have and what they don’t have. From there, you can build them and build them and build them.

Let these be two key principles in your leadership: build people, and aim small, miss small. With that in mind, let’s look at some keys for building a successful ministry.

### **Key 1—People Need True Pastors and Leaders**

It doesn’t matter what gift or what talent people in your ministry bring to the table, they need a pastor and a leader. Without an effective pastor and leader, ministries and churches fizzle out and do not extend a measurable level of lasting success. What are some key roles for you as a pastor/leader? One role is to love on the people whom God’s entrusted to you. The people within your ministry have been entrusted into your care by the Lord, so love them, and don’t use them. Love them, and even when they can’t give you anything, love them still. Another role is to take care of them. They’re not there to take care of you. You are their leader, so take care of them. I have to tell you that as a leader, oftentimes when I’ve seen someone who serves under me go through a really hard time in their personal life, I’ve actually fired them from ministry. I’ve said, “You are

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a fantastic leader, but your personal life has exploded, and I want to give you room now to grow. I want to give you room to deal with what's going on in your life." I've let them go, and I have to tell you that each time I've done that, they've cried, and it wasn't out of sadness, it was out of, "Wow, I can't believe you love me so much that you'd lose me from the ministry in order to take care of me." The loyalty that is purchased then is priceless.

As you love and care for the people under you, they will see your loyalty because you have chosen to walk with them, work with them, and make them a priority. And because you love and care for them, they will want to help pour into the ministries and tasks you're building and carry it onto the next generation. Thus, any system will only work if you truly build people. Reproduce people, put people under you that have giftings and talents, but invest in them regardless of what they can do for you, and you will be an excellent builder and a truly effective leader.

### **Key 2—Build a Common Language**

Each culture starts with speaking the same language, and building ministry with its own common language is no different. There should be a language among your people that sounds like you. If you were to come to the churches that I've served in, you will hear my verbiage come out of those leaders. Why? Because I've built common language around it. I was saved when I was four years old, and something I always say is that the generation of children and youth in any church are not the generation of tomorrow, they're the generation of today. If

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you come to any church I've served in, you would hear that. We're not looking to build the generation of tomorrow; we're building the generation of today. That's part of my common language.

When you're building your ministry and building up people, create a common language among your ministries. A language that is clear will become part of the ministry culture. Language will help build a reproducible ministry because people then will always lean into the language; it becomes part of the DNA and helps to form behavior which also helps to create core values that build forward.

### **Key 3—Build Core Values**

When building your system, it's important to build core values. Build the values and the principles that matter to you as a leader, and that will further your ministry's cause.

For me and my ministry, a key value is loyalty. The leaders training under me know that I'm loyal to them to a fault, which gives them confidence when they serve. And in developing the key value of loyalty, the leaders training under me exude confidence when they talk because they understand that I have their backs. In turn, they build loyalty toward me. I don't have to tell them to be loyal; I simply demonstrate it, and because that's one of my key values, it comes back to me.

Another key value in my ministry is excellence. I'm not a perfectionist, and I'm not all in the details, but I want things done well. Because striving for excellence is also part of my personal values, it shows up in my ministry, and it creates a reproducible ministry. I'll hear my leaders say things like, "It doesn't



have to be perfect. You just have to do your best.” And doing our best means that things will always move forward. Every ministry has key values. It is important for you to identify them and foster them. It will build continuity, strength, confidence, and durability. However, make sure they are true values, things that can actually be seen, not a wish list. That doesn’t mean you do this 100 percent of the time but pretty close.

### **Key 4—Build Forward**

Another key when building a system is to build forward. Don’t build backward—build forward. It doesn’t matter how successful your ministry is—it will die if you don’t build forward. God is always moving us forward, so always in your heart and your head, move your ministry and people forward. What’s the next step? Where’s the next place? God, what more do you have for this ministry? How can I expand? Ask God how you can build forward because you believe He has more. Build systems that are not always complete in themselves. What do I mean by that? Leave room for things to move forward, for things to accelerate, and for things to come out of the box. Don’t seal things; always leave room for growth. Never act like the ministry is complete; always be willing to develop and build out. Give room for out-of-the-box thinking and forward motion.

Finally, a surefire way to know you are building your ministry forward is to always make sure to build a reproducible system. Build places for the younger generation to help lead right in the midst of your ministry. At my Vacation Bible School, we have a woman who leads worship, but right beside her is one of

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my young adults helping lead worship. Right beside the young adult is one of my youth leading worship, and right beside the youth is one of our children. Four stages of life are represented on the platform every time we do Vacation Bible School. Why? Because I'm building into the next generation to ensure that particular system is automatically reproducible. When the woman who was leading was no longer able, the young adult was ready to step right into her position and lead without missing a beat because we had built a reproducible ministry.

Each of my leaders serving under me has someone serving under them, ready to reproduce and build the ministry. The second person's job, then, is to find the third person, and so on. In doing so, everyone in the ministry is constantly building and reproducing a strong, powerful ministry that's moving forward for the Kingdom. And these people bring freshness, zeal, and new ideas that help everything to move forward. Never talk about the past more than the future.

### Conclusion

I want to encourage you as we end this chapter that it is all about building the Kingdom well. We don't want to just build fast. We want to build it strong because the Kingdom has everything to do with souls and with lives; therefore, we want to build the ministry system by system, person by person. Leader, you must determine in your heart that you want to build sustainable, reproducible ministries that allow ministries to be places of transformation.

Well-built systems create safety within your ministry or organization. The church should be a safe place—when systems

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are solid and procedures are clear in how the ministry works and operates, there's an umbrella of safety, and transformation can happen.

Transformation happens in safe places. People do not become vulnerable or transparent in unsafe places because they don't want to get hurt. But when they walk into a church or a meeting or where Christian activity is happening and it feels safe, it creates an environment for vulnerability, and within that vulnerability, transformation happens. Everything we do as leaders should create places where transformation happens. So if you love and care for people and you build strong systems that are sustainable and reproducible, you will automatically create safety. As you create safety, you will see transformation come out of your ministry like you've never seen it before. Leader and child of God, build your ministry and people well.