Defining moments in our lives are those touchpoint moments when something inside us shifts and we know that our world is profoundly different than it was before. The incidents are often small, and it is often not until later in life when you are asked to reflect, that you realize how important a person or an event was to your overall focus in life. These defining moments are like the clothespins that hold up the tapestry of our lives.

In 2003 I took my first Best-Selling Authors program from Jack Canfield in Santa Barbara. He was busy writing *Success Principles* then. In class, I asked him why he never did a “Chicken Soup for the Lawyer’s Soul” book. With his affable, quick wit he quipped, “You know, wouldn’t a ‘Chicken Soup for the Lawyer’s Soul’ book kind of be like the book *What Men Know About Women*, you know the one where you open the pages and there is nothing on them?” Everyone in our class laughed and although I knew he was joking I think the seed for this book came from that defining moment. I knew lawyers did have souls and I wanted to write about them and study them as a way of leading and encouraging others to improve their lives and practices.

Getting lawyers to open up and talk about what is real and meaningful is not easy. We are taught to be strong and fierce and letting our guard down is not something that we do very often. I asked Jack how to get people to be vulnerable in the interviews and he said, “If you want them to be vulnerable, you need to be vulnerable.” That comment stuck with me and in our interviews, I revealed much of myself too.

I began to interview friends of mine in the legal community about their defining moments. My curiosity drove me to wonder whether there was a pattern in successful people’s lives and if there was a leadership model I could share with others to help them achieve their goals and dreams. Learning what experiences shaped them and identifying patterns in their stories would surely help motivate, encourage, and inspire
other professionals. There is no way that I can cover the depth and breadth of these lawyers’ lives in this short book. The point is to give you the stories around the LEAD line that shaped them.

Hearing about them and seeing how their LEAD lines operated in their lives has been an inspirational experience for me. Sharing it with you is an awesome joy and privilege. My goal is for you to identify your LEAD lines and begin living from your highest self in order to achieve your life’s purpose. You may want to adopt some of them too.

When I began to think about LEAD lines, I broke the word “lead” down into four main leadership principles: Legacy, Excellence, Authenticity, and Determination.

Once I had the four leadership principles, a pattern developed. The stories naturally gravitated into these four categories. I am grateful for the many amazing lawyers who are included in the book. Their back stories—the experiences that formed the basis of their lives—point us to events that triggered their most profound, life-changing moments where a pivot was required to broaden their horizons and get them to where they are today.

The key component that distinguishes leaders is how they overcome and use their life struggles to grow and advance themselves, their families, and their communities. Everyone has difficulties as you will see in these stories. We often look at highly successful people and think it was all champagne and roses along the way. Many of the lawyers in this book have overcome insurmountable odds.

Anyone who thinks that lawyers are not the greatest group of public servants and philanthropists will have to think twice after reading this book. People who told me they had nothing to say were often astounded at what they shared. My interviews only confirmed what I knew: Lawyers are not only natural leaders, but they are also givers and hard workers. You see them serving in philanthropic positions in their profession and communities all across the country every day and yet the public is often unaware of the good they do. Leadership is engrained in the legal profession, and every lawyer is in some way, each day, being a leader.

My research reveals they all got there the same way everyone else did, with their own childhood issues, rejections, disappointments and tragedies, but they overcame them and rose up to achieve their goals. Everyone is a work in progress, and I am honored to be able to show
you glimpses into the lives of some of the top lawyers in America today, and some that are no longer with us, who leave a legacy for us to learn valuable life lessons.

Since the day I graduated law school I knew I was entering the world’s greatest profession and from now, many years later, I still feel the same way. This book has given me the opportunity to get to know many great lawyers and explore their backgrounds in more depth, and the more I learned about the lawyers, many of whom are my friends, the more respect and admiration I had for the profession as a whole and what motivates us as members of a great society that strives to help make the world go around in new and better ways.

I have been lucky enough to be involved in the American Bar Association since 1986 when, as a young lawyer and representative of the Houston Young Lawyers Association (I had the honor of serving as the first female President in 1990–91), I attended the infamous Montreal Young Lawyers Division (YLD) meeting. I was impressed and awed by what was going on there. Shortly thereafter, I was appointed Vice-Chair of the Juvenile Justice committee under the chair, William P. Hogan, by the then YLD Chair, William P. Hubbard, who became an ABA President many years later. I eventually became a Director of the Young Lawyers Division under then Chair, Judy Perry Martinez, who is one of our interviewees and will be the ABA President in 2019–20.

In my many years in the legal profession, I began to see a pattern of success and realized that everyone has an individual way of doing things. There are many paths to success. I wanted to talk to lawyers from all walks of life and in different practice settings and really find out what makes them tick. The interviews are a treasure trove of interesting autobiographical information about some of the brightest legal minds and successful lawyers in America. I had a goldmine of leadership information to pass on not only to lawyers but also to women and men in all professions. This harmonious blend of stories is a leadership manual for any entrepreneur or person who wants to learn the secrets of getting ahead and enjoying life to its fullest.

I hope you enjoy these stories and can see yourself in the history, the experiences, and the trials and tribulations of the great lawyers herein. My goal is to inspire you, to motivate you, and to encourage you to be the best person you can be and to find joy and meaning in your life each day.
The acronym for the LEAD line leadership model is: Legacy, Excellence, Authenticity, Determination.

**Legacy**

Legacy is the first prong of the LEAD line model of leadership. We often think of legacy in terms of heirs to our property or how much of an estate we leave to our children or what extraordinary, heroic things we do that merit special recognition. Programs we start that remain after we are gone; children we birth; books we write. As I see and experience more and more of life, I realize that legacy is a living, breathing NOW thing. It occurs in the moment and can be measured in both big and small ways. Each kind act, whether it be a smile to a suffering stranger, or a favor done when no one is looking contributes to your legacy and builds the foundation for a profound spiritual legacy that cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

Lawyers are lucky because the opportunities to produce and influence legacy abound in untold ways every day. As Alan Kopit says in his interview, your legacy is the number of lives you change.

You just have to be aware of them, recognize them, and appreciate them for what they are. Look around at your life and think of all the ways you have been able to create legacy. Whether it be in the training of competent staff, nurturing law students and young associates to achieve their highest dreams, or by helping a client get a good result. If you begin to consider this, you will find many ways that you are creating your own legacy each and every day.

**Excellence**

Excellence is the second prong of the leadership model. The law is an area where excellence is required. Having been through the rigorous training in law for three years after college, the practice of attending to details and making sure you get it right is ingrained in most lawyers’ heads. As our interviews reveal, the path to becoming excellent can be filled with potholes and as Mr. Perdue says, “Out of the hottest furnace comes the hardest steel.” Excellence contains many life lessons and it is
something that we can keep refining each day as we follow the LEAD lines we learn in the interviews.

**Authenticity**

As the interviews will reveal, we often wait for others to tell us what they will us to do and we may do things for the wrong reasons because we are not being authentic. The road to becoming authentic is not a straight line. But if you continue down the path, you will get there and be so much happier. As Barbara Mayden says in her interview, “Find your voice because no one is going to give it to you.” As lawyers, we have many opportunities to blend in, but we also have opportunities to make waves. The concepts explored in the interviews form a picture of how others found their way to authenticity and I hope it will give you many ideas of how to find it for yourself too. The inner peace you have from living your own truth and for being who you know you were born to be will be your reward.

**Determination**

No great thing was ever accomplished without much effort. And with effort there needs to be flexibility, the ability to come up against all odds and overcome them. The interviewees in these stories faced tough situations of all sorts and how they handled them and their results will be an inspiration to all. There is a saying that the darkest hour is before the dawn. So many give up on their dreams before they fulfill them, or they just get lost in the mundane day-to-day of life and it passes without their actually reaching their goals and dreams. My story is in this area of determination because I feel that is the one quality that, without it, you can’t succeed. Nothing worth having is easy, as we know from studying for the bar exam. Flunking the bar, being an immigrant child who could not speak English, being someone who was discriminated against because of the color of their skin all give rise to a choice: Are you going to quit or are you going to stay in the game? Great lawyers are made from those who persevere and stand up for themselves and what they believe in.
There is a wide range of experience among the lawyers’ stories herein. I have not told you all of their accomplishments, those can easily be found online. I wanted to stick with the nuts and bolts of what shaped them and what brought them to the point today where they are fighting for what is right in our society and giving it their all. They are all heroes.