

## APPENDIX D

---

### Words to Live By

I suspect most leaders have their mantras, favorite sayings about what they think matters most in being an outstanding professional, in directing successful organizations, and in leading a good and ethical life. Anyone who has ever worked with me has surely heard me say some of these things. Effective leaders should be positively predictable characters, and their colleagues should be able to recall the words that such leaders use to live by. Some of these sayings I believe I coined. But many others are those I have borrowed from other sources but find it relevant and useful to use them to make a point, usually in encouragement of others. Here are some of my favorites.

#### **Sayings From Others**

*Find a good company and stick with it.*

I have to give my father credit for this one. He really lived it—43 years with the same company. A true organization man. I realize that this is not the advice that most of us would give to any young person trying to start a career in that surely they will change jobs and professions multiple times over a lifetime. What I mean when I say this is to find a good organization, employer, and in my case higher education organization and stick with it. Yes, I know that is really passé. But I confess to being a dinosaur. Institutional loyalty is one of my highest values.

*Stick with what you know.*

This is Marty Ouzts's, a certified public accountant in Columbia, South Carolina, advice to me when I sought his counsel on whether to open a car wash in Brevard, North Carolina.

*Never give a loan to a family member. Instead, make it a “gift!”*

This is also a mantra from Marty Ouzts.

*Having to pay taxes is better than not having to pay taxes. You need to “think accounting,” John!*

This is another of Marty’s sayings.

*The best surprise is no surprise.*

This is a commercial adopted by Holiday Inn in 1975 and one I constantly preach to my staff.

*Make all your decisions for today as if you and your employer could live with the results of those decisions for the rest of your career.*

This is advice from my former mentor, John J. Duffy, chancellor, Regional Campuses and Continuing Education at University of South Carolina, in 1983.

*Never forget whom you work for and whose name is on your paycheck.*

This is further advice from John J. Duffy.

*Make decisions on the basis of what’s best for the university overall, even if it isn’t always best for your unit.*

This is still more advice from John J. Duffy.

*When it comes time to cut the budgets, we will never cut money for student financial aid, or the library. No student aid, no library, no university.*

And more wisdom from John J. Duffy.

*When you are talking about someone who isn’t part of the conversation, try to let them know what you said about them in their absence.*

This is advice from my USC colleague, J. Manning Hiers in 1977.

*Good consulting is good conversation.*

This is more advice from Manning Hiers.

*You need a career where you stay out of other peoples’ meetings!*

This is advice from John Whiteley, professor of social ecology at the University of California, Irvine, circa 1985.

*All work has value.*

This is a sentiment I learned from my father, was preached by Martin Luther King, and was observed by President Richard Nixon.

*The way you are doing things now is perfectly organized to get the results you are getting right now.*

Edward Deming’s original statement is “Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.”

*The most important things to say and do, like I love you or voting in Chicago, need to be said or done early and often.*

The cynical phrases “vote early and often” and “vote early and vote often” are variously attributed to three different Chicagoans: Al Capone, the famous gangster; Richard J. Daley, mayor from 1955 to 1976; and William Hale Thompson, mayor from 1915–1923 and 1931–1935. All three were notorious for their corruption and their manipulation of the democratic process.

*The screwing you get isn't worth the screwing you get.*

Dr. James Reardon, in spring 1967 repeated this observation to John N. Gardner for use in practice of U.S. Air Force psychiatric social work.

*There is no sense crying over anything that can be replaced by money.*

This is a quote from my mentor, Thomas F. Jones, president at USC from 1962–1974.

*As often as possible, seek out “an extended opportunity for observing and learning from student behavior.”*

This is Thomas F. Jones’s observation on the significance of the May 1970 student riot at USC.

*Your friends, they come and they go. But your enemies just accumulate!*

This is also from Thomas F. Jones, June 1981.

*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you—the golden rule.*

*I would rather have someone inside the tent pissing out than outside pissing in!*

My paraphrase of President Lyndon Johnson’s statement, “It’s probably better to have him inside the tent pissing out, than outside the tent pissing in,” regarding FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, as quoted in *The New York Times* (1971).

*Son, all those helicopters are my helicopters.*

This is attributed to President Lyndon Johnson when a Marine White House honor guard directed him to one of two helicopters parked behind the White House.

*Nothing ventured, nothing gained.*

The saying dates back to Chaucer (c. 1374) and is similar to the late 14th-century French proverb *Qui onques rien n'enprist riens n'achieva* (He who never undertook anything never achieved anything).

*Success has many parents; disaster is an orphan.*

The actual quote, made popular by President John F. Kennedy, was “Victory has a hundred fathers, and defeat is an orphan. However, it was originally coined by the Italian diplomat and son-in-law of Mussolini, Count Galeazzo Ciano (1903–1944) in 1942: *La victoria trova cento padri, e nessuno vuole riconoscere l’insuccesso.*

*Parenting is a lifetime sentence.*

*Parenthood: A Life Sentence - A Journey From Womb To Tomb*, November 9, 2016, Robert Nicoletti PhD

*The buck stops here.*

The sign “The Buck Stops Here” that was on President Truman’s desk in his White House office was made in the Federal Reformatory at El Reno, Oklahoma. Fred A. Canfil, then U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Missouri and a friend of Truman, saw a similar sign while visiting the reformatory and asked the warden if a sign like it could be made for President Truman. The sign was made and mailed to the president on October 2, 1945. But in this context, it is in reference when one of my staff makes a mistake, but it is I who am ultimately responsible for what we do.

*When the going gets tough, the tough get going.*

The origin of this phrase has been attributed to various sources. It appears to come from American football parlance, with the earliest published sources in the 1950s, including an article in the *Corpus Christi Times* quoting local football coach John Thomas in 1953, and from a 1954 article in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel-News* quoting coach Francis William Leahy.

*It is better to ask permission than to seek forgiveness.*

This is a rephrasing of Admiral Grace Hopper’s statement “It’s easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission.”

*Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.*

This is from John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address in 1961. (Note that I laid the foundation of an answer to that question when I was in college—which is why college matters for our democracy.)

*There’s no future in old age.*

This is from my adoptive mother, Margaret N. Gardner.

*You never know about a couple unless you are on the inside of the bedroom door.*

Another gem from my mother.

*It's a lot cheaper to keep the students you have than to go out and recruit new ones.*

This is a widely used mantra in enrollment management and retention consulting

*Treat OPM (other people's money) as your money (as in your college's/university's/unit's money). Because it is.*

In finance, other people's money, or OPM, is a slang term that refers to financial leverage. OPM refers to borrowed capital that is used to increase the potential returns as well as the risks of an investment. OPM can be used by individuals or by corporations.

## **Sayings From John**

*Everyone needs a "Marty." Meaning a really good accountant especially, . . . and while you are at it—a lawyer, doctor, financial advisor, all of whom know lots about what you know nothing about.*

This is a reference is to my adult life-long accountant and great friend, Marty Ouzts.

*Always ask, "Who else needs to know?" ("Whom should I cc on this message?").*

This is a directive to me from my dean, Harry E. "Sid" Varney, expressing his displeasure when I failed to CC him on a message to one of his fellow deans.

*Keep your boss(es) informed. Keep those for whom you are the boss informed.*

Paraphrased from my father and my second dean at USC, Sid Varney both of whom were physical dead ringers for each other.

*Always treat people as ends and not means.*

*Keep opening the door for others just as it was opened for you.*

*Never stop looking for mentors.*

*Great organizations are flexible organizations.*

*Always pay yourself first.*

This is a primer on planning for retirement.

*Get some exercise every day.*

*When you get uptight, ask yourself, "What's the worst thing that could happen to me if this doesn't go well?"*

*Reward yourself for your good deeds. Reward others for theirs.*

*If your organization is making money, share it with everyone who actually made that money.*

*You surely can get a lot more done when students aren't around. There's only one problem with that thinking—no students, no institution, no job.*

*You need to serve the students you have, not the ones you'd rather have, used to have in the past, or think you used to be like.*

*The easiest way to remember what you told somebody is to always tell the truth.*

*Students are much more likely to remember what you did, how you treated them, the feedback you gave to them, than what you taught in your class lectures.*

*You never really know what big ideas you are laying out for your students that will really stick with them. That's okay. Some things will stick with them, so just proceed as if that's the case.*

*Design all your learning activities for students with the idea of "teaching for epiphany."*

*Every student can be taught something. Every student has curiosity. I never had a student who didn't want to learn about something and whom I couldn't teach something.*

*The most important thing to do is to do what you said you would do.*

*If you stay straight on the little stuff, you will always be straight on the big stuff.*

For example, what you report on your travel expense reimbursement requests!

*This institution was here before you. It will go on after you. So how can you contribute to it while you are here? What is going to be your legacy?*

This is what I would say silently to myself as I walked the oldest part of the USC campus inside a stone wall built in 1821 by slave labor.

*Everyone needs a personal mission, something you live every day. What's yours?*

My mission is that of my employer, the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education.

*All of us need a core set of values; I call mine "my personal philosophy of higher education."*

*Avoid at all costs creating a Bay of Pigs. Don't be afraid to rethink a decision you and your organization have already made.*

This reference is to the plans set in motion by the outgoing Eisenhower Administration in 1960 for an invasion of Cuba, which

President Kennedy unwisely decided had a life of their own and could not be stopped—ending in one of our country’s greatest foreign policy disasters.

*If you keep doing things the same way all the time, you are probably doing something that needs to be rethought.*

*You always get more opportunities when you create more opportunities for others.*

*Everything is connected to everything else, and everyone is connected to everyone else.*

*Even though you don’t have to say “please” and “thank you” to people who work for you, you should say these things.*

*In addition to asking “What will this cost if we do this?” always ask, “What will this cost if we don’t do this?”*

*Keep giving back to alma mater. It made you who you are today.*

*We all should have a sense of obligation to some entity, organization, or cause that is bigger than I/us alone. What have I/we done for our country lately? Our work is in the national interest.*

*It’s okay to get help. The smartest people I know get help, stop and ask for advice, and then take it.*

*I am the only man you know who not only stops and asks for directions, he takes them!*

*Don’t shit an old shitter!*

This is a constant reminder from a father, John N. Gardner, to his son, Jonathan D. Gardner. I sometimes say this to my subordinates, although paraphrased in more polite language.

*Might as well.*

This is a favorite rationalization of Betsy Barefoot and John Gardner.

*If John can do it, anyone can!*

This is an old Gardner Institute saying since 1999.

*Do they have the horses?*

This is a phrase meaning “enough of the right people to turn this place around.”

*The jury is in.*

This is a major theme of this book, and something I say periodically to myself and my colleagues.

Discuss: After you read my words to live by, share your words that you use with your professional associates to be a role model for them and to motivate them.

Reactions: What are your reactions to these words to live by? Do you have any insights or something you might want to consider further?

Decisions: Is there anything you read or thought about in this section that has led you to make a decision?