

8

PRINCIPLES FOR HUMAN-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

THE YOUNG LEADER'S GUIDE
TO CAREER HARMONY

JACK CHENG



INDIE BOOKS
INTERNATIONAL

© 2024 by Jack Cheng

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the publisher. Requests for permission should be directed to permissions@indiebooksintl.com, or mailed to Permissions, Indie Books International, 2511 Woodlands Way, Oceanside, CA 92054.

The views and opinions in this book are those of the author at the time of writing this book, and do not reflect the opinions of Indie Books International or its editors.

Neither the publisher nor the author is engaged in rendering legal or other professional services through this book. If expert assistance is required, the services of appropriate professionals should be sought. The publisher and the author shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused directly or indirectly by the information in this publication.

Academic All-America® is a registered trademark of College Sports Communicators

Book strategy by Leslie A. Rubin, www.imagematterzadvisors.com

ISBN-13:

Library of Congress Control Number:

Cover and interior designed by *theBookDesigners*

Art used on the cover by Lydia Cheng

INDIE BOOKS INTERNATIONAL®, INC.

2511 WOODLANDS WAY

OCEANSIDE, CA 92054

www.indiebooksintl.com

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	ix
PROLOGUE: Why Principled Leadership Matters Now More Than Ever	xiii
PRINCIPLE 1. Make Human Connections	1
PRINCIPLE 2. Love What You Do	7
PRINCIPLE 3. Always Reach Out And Give Back	15
PRINCIPLE 4. Have A Growth Mindset	23
PRINCIPLE 5. Go Beyond Yourself	31
PRINCIPLE 6. Know Your Endgame	41
PRINCIPLE 7. Build A Community Of Allies	49
PRINCIPLE 8. Adopt A Philosophy Of Harmony	59
EPILOGUE: Your Next Chapter	67
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	73
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	75
INDEX	77
WORKS CITED AND AUTHOR'S NOTES	79



PRINCIPLE 1

Make Human Connections

*People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

—MAYA ANGELOU, *American poet*

*I've learned a huge amount because I've been tested and, more
importantly, I've been trusted.*

—PETE TOWNSHEND, *British guitar player for The Who*

You may think that the main job of a CEO is to concentrate on the bottom line and make decisions that keep the arrow of revenue pointing up. Obviously, paying attention to profits is important, but that is neither the starting point nor end goal of leadership.

I have been blessed with many good friendships over the years, with wonderful people inside and beyond the automotive industry. In this age when we can connect with anyone around the world, and yet loneliness is epidemic, it will not surprise you that building lasting friendships does not just happen on its own. I pay attention to that spark in a person that lets me know we have some things in common, enough to strike up a conversation over dinner or in the hallway after a meeting. When there is that commonality and camaraderie, a friendship can take shape. But that friendship needs to be tended over time. This, by some miracle of personality and persistence, has become second nature to me.

It may seem obvious that we all share a common humanity. But I have seen too often how a company's bottom line and shareholder value can take precedence over the people we work with and those who buy our products and services. That is a dangerous road, in my view.

That's why it is so important, now more than ever, to be uncompromising in promoting a human-centered approach to leadership.

Here is what I mean. To be truly human is to be in relationships with others. My relationships with my family members mean everything to me. Close friendships developed over shared interests—for me that would include cars and rock music—have also created deep connections and lasting memories.

We all spend a good deal of time at work, so human connection at work is essential. I appreciate the connections I make through work. I like to think I can count on close colleagues, and they can count on me, for challenges both inside and outside of work.

In every area of life, these relationship bonds are what make us human. They are the bedrock of a well-lived life. Human connection is vital to understanding ourselves and being open to the possibilities and potential all around us. Being human means building trust within those relationships. It is about building our own trustworthiness and growing in the trust of others. This sometimes requires radical honesty with us and with other people.

Living in the digital age means it is too easy to get disconnected from our humanity and the humanity of others. We can observe the world passively from a screen, or even divide our attention among multiple screens. A global pandemic showed us how much we could accomplish in this physically disconnected way of being, but it also exposed how important human

connection is. So, we need human touch. We need the connection of face-to-face encounters to build strong relationships.

I've always enjoyed interacting with young people, and it's not just something I started doing as an elder. I've been doing it since I was young myself. I have a strong desire to see young people connect and create meaningful relationships.

I vividly remember a particular incident from when I first arrived in the US in 1985. When I landed in San Francisco, a former classmate from high school and college in Taiwan, who was attending UC Berkeley to study mechanical engineering, picked me up and took me to the campus. I then suggested that we have a party and enjoy the sunshine. My friend was always so focused on studying, and I thought he needed to take a break and have some fun.

We invited many of his classmates from UC Berkeley, and it turned out to be a fantastic party. The music was great. I was enjoying the evening, and I hoped my friends were too.

Reflecting on that experience, I realize that I had already started my formal career and had skipped pursuing a master's degree, instead moving to Detroit for work. I remember feeling that my peers who were still in school were jealous of me because I was driving the latest company car while they were still driving old, second-hand vehicles.

Meanwhile, I could appreciate the freedom they had as students without the responsibilities of full-time work. I wanted to impart some advice to my friend and his classmates, urging them to enjoy their time in school and not just focus on their studies. I encouraged them to have fun on campus, meet new people, dance with your partner like you are the only two in the world that evening, and understand what is happening in the world.

Through conversations with others, you can gain new perspectives and ideas. I reminded my friend and the other

students that Albert Einstein eventually became a philosopher, not just an engineer or scientist, because he sought answers beyond what he learned in his field.

To truly grow and improve yourself, connecting with people and exploring the world beyond yourself is crucial.

Better Relationships Make You A Better Human

In an article in *Forbes* magazine, John Knotts writes about how companies can grow and stay human centered.² Knotts defines a human-centered company this way: “an organization that prioritizes the well-being and satisfaction of its employees, customers, and communities at large.” He notes how businesses can do things like promote healthy communication and foster empathy. These concepts are not complicated and are fairly easy to navigate when a company is small. When a company grows, stakeholder concerns can cloud our view of how we can affect the broader community.

I believe that by connecting with others and broadening our horizons, we can become better versions of ourselves, and build better organizations.

If you are a workaholic, you won't know what your family is up to. What's the point? You're living to work, not working to live. Whenever someone comes to me with family issues that need to be taken care of, I think that should be their first priority.

Prioritizing family doesn't mean you're procrastinating or neglecting work. It's about looking at your life holistically and striving to do your best in every element. I think this spiritual aspect is crucial. If you don't have this spirituality, living in this world can be meaningless. Everything becomes work and living the life of a recluse.

A Human-Centered Relationship With Technology

At what point are technological advances a detriment to human civilization and the planet as a whole? This is a question we must always keep grappling with. That's why I believe so strongly that, as the EV universe continues to take shape and evolve, companies must remain human centered. That is a core value for us at MIH, and it is much more than just words in a corporate human relations handbook. We and our partners are developing ever more complex technologies, but these need to be first thought of as solutions to problems faced by humans and the planet.

My colleague Ted Lien wrote about this recently when he described the work of our testing and certification working group. He wrote, "Technological development is always faster than regulations. When new technologies are still developing, we have to conceive the content of testing and certification. When the working group puts forward the development results, there must be corresponding testing and certification projects to accelerate the implementation of the technology."³ In other words, testing and certification must be in place to solve the problem and stay centered on the human factor in everything we do.

I often wonder how younger people think about the future. Based on my many interactions, I believe the future is in very good hands. While I still have a role to play, I want to do everything I can so the humans who come after me are in a better future than I can even imagine.