

“Oliver DeMille and Shanon Brooks have given insights into the Leadership Education model for teens that are not only easily understood but inspiring to read. Their teachings give credence to my voice as a parent using this model in my home. The Teen 100 Book List and the insights on how to use it are, of themselves, worth the price of the book!”

—**Teri Helms, TJEEd mom to 5 boys** [[www.tommymom.com](http://www.tommymom.com)]

“This book is so-o-o-o good. I am getting a copy for every single one of my young adult children for Christmas even though all but one are now in their 20s (17, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28). I’m buying a copy for every member of my family! The content is invaluable. I think this book is going to have a huge impact on the young people who read it.”

— **Deena Ortiz, Director of SoCal FATJEF TJEEd Forum**

“Every once in a while a second witness comes along and in one magical moment says something that speaks truth to the soul; and the person finally remembers who he is. That is what Oliver DeMille and Shanon Brooks have done. They remind us who we are and what we’re about.”

—**Tiffany Earl, Author, *Say\*Go\*Be\*Do***  
**Founder & Director LEMI Scholar Projects™**  
[www.libercommunities.org](http://www.libercommunities.org)

“This book will allow you, as a youth, to feel, to know, and to see how much we love you, how important you are to us, and why YOU ARE SO WORTH IT! Read it, apply it, live it, and enjoy being YOU!”

—**Kami Mitchell, Director of Youth For Freedom (YFF)**  
**Leadership Youth Conferences**  
[www.youthforfreedom.org](http://www.youthforfreedom.org)

Brilliant! A book on leadership written to the ultimate target audience, the leaders of the next generation! This book is not just a remake of TJEd; it's completely new material that really speaks to our current needs as parents and educators. Not only will I be recommending it to my students, but to their parents as well. What a gift to our teens, our nation and ourselves!

— **Shawn Crane, Founder & Moderator**  
**TJEdMuse@yahoo.com**

“This a MUST READ for today’s youth and their parents! Don’t let the word TEENS in the title fool you. This book gives enormous perspective for all ages. We live in difficult times; our children have a big task ahead of them. DeMille and Brooks have prescribed usable, inspiring medicine for the maladies of our modern society and delivered them in a way everyone can understand.”

— **Nicholeen Peck, author of *Parenting A House United***  
**<http://teachingselfgovernment.com>**

“Whether a business plan, a personal schedule, or a wilderness trek plan, great ideas only have results when they are executed. That’s the secret: execution, execution, execution. That’s why this book is so valuable—it gives fun, practical, meaningful ideas and examples that focus on execution. We’ll definitely be reading it at Williamsburg Academy.”

— **James C. Ure, Esq.**  
**Headmaster, Williamsburg Academy**

“I have read TJEd for Teens and loved the work. I definitely want to share this with my own teens and teens I mentor in my classrooms, both live and online. Talking straight to teens empowers them and they almost always rise to the occasion. Thank you for creating this work and speaking with such dignity to the youth.”

— **Donna Goff**  
**Co-Founder, The Princess Academies, LLC**

**Thomas  
Jefferson  
Education  
FOR  
Teens**

**Oliver DeMille  
Shanon Brooks**

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emotional, educational, medical and other concerns. Minors  
should complete the activities and exercises described in this  
book under the direction of a parent or guardian.*

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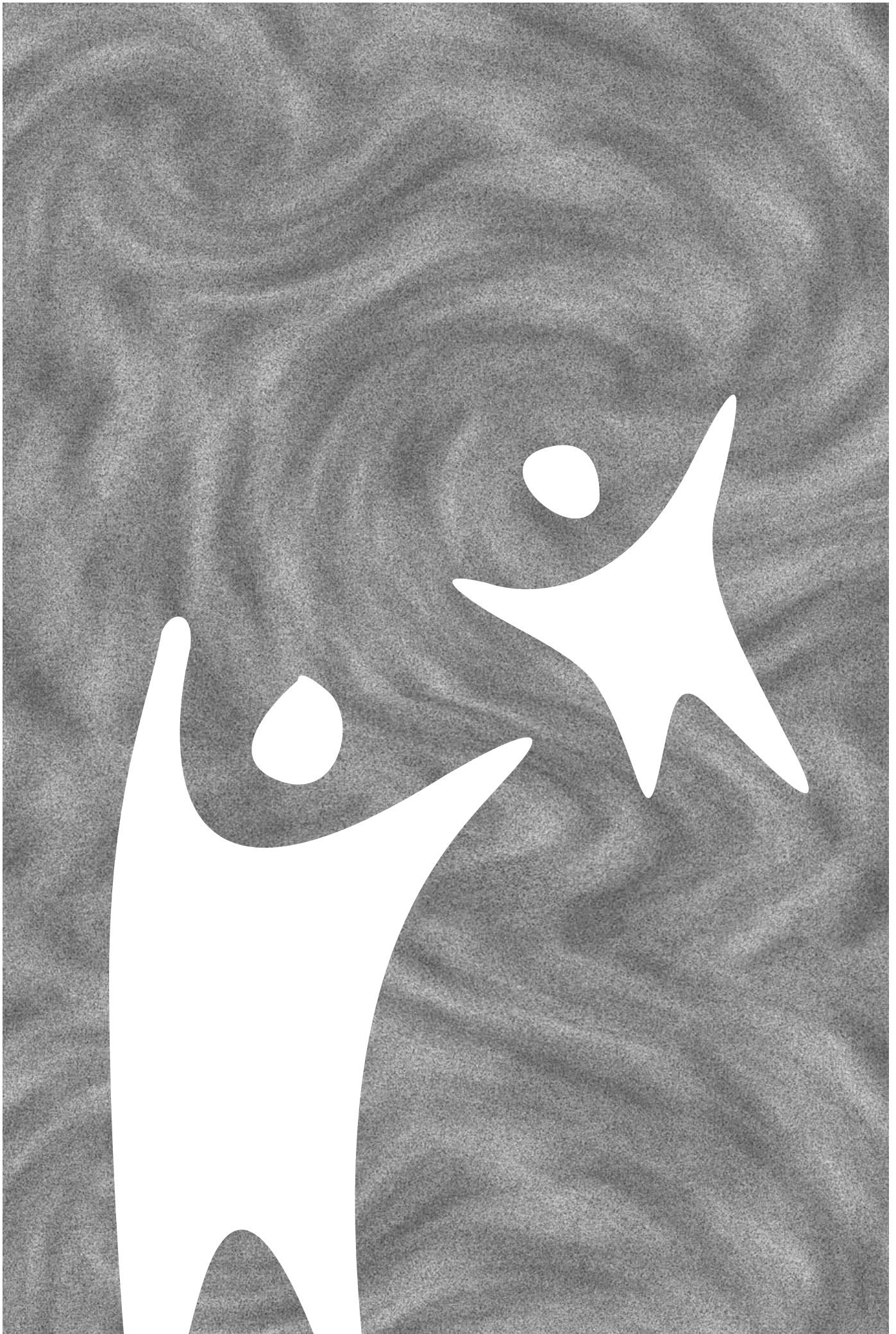


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TO  
AMBER  
OLIVER  
JON  
EMMA  
SARA  
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BEN  
ELIZA  
DONYA  
AMMON  
SAMMY  
HYRUM  
MERI  
AND  
ABBY



**IT IS SAID** THAT WHEN GOD WANTS TO CHANGE THE WORLD, HE SENDS A BABY—PERFECTLY TIMED TO GROW, LEARN, PREPARE AND THEN TAKE ACTION AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN ONE BABY WON'T SUFFICE, WHEN THE CHALLENGES FACING THE WORLD ARE JUST TOO GREAT; AND SO INSTEAD OF A GREAT REFORMER OR A FEW KEY THINKERS, WHAT IS NEEDED IS A WHOLE GENERATION OF LEADERS.

THIS HAPPENED IN THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C., AND IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE COMMON ERA, THEN AGAIN IN THE AMERICAN FOUNDING GENERATION.

**WE BELIEVE IT IS HAPPENING AGAIN TODAY...**



# 1

## YOUR FUTURE

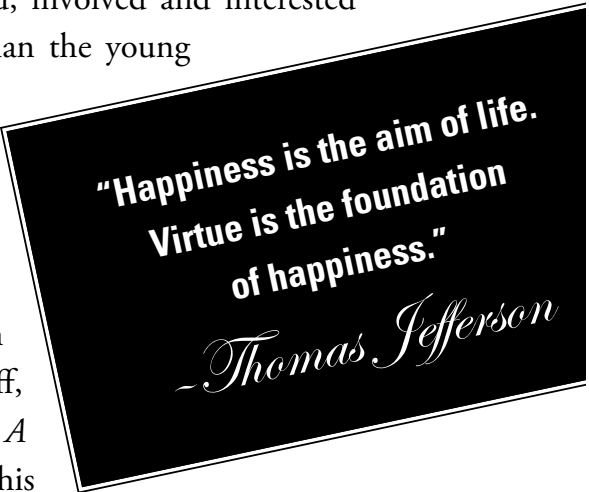
A lot of books to young people in their teens seem to be just dumbed-down versions of the original. We think that's weird because it should be just the opposite. We believe today's youth are more sophisticated, involved and interested in world events and the future than the young people of most past generations. Some would say that they are also more intelligent than any generation in history. We tend to agree.

We believe this generation of youth is the most gifted and promising generation ever. So we intend to give you the deep stuff, the real treatment. We hope you will read *A Thomas Jefferson Education* in addition to this book—the two are totally different writings, and in our experience teens are up to the regular version as much as any adult. This book is written to tell the youth some additional, vital, deep things.

So let's get deep right now.

### **WHEN GOD WANTS TO CHANGE THE WORLD...**

It is said that when God wants to change the world, he sends a baby—perfectly timed to grow, learn, prepare and then take action at the right moment. Whether you believe in God or the Universe, or whatever you want to call the powers higher than man, you can see how much sense this makes. We believe it is true: when God sees



**"Happiness is the aim of life.  
Virtue is the foundation  
of happiness."**

*—Thomas Jefferson*

a need coming in the world, he sends a baby.

But there are times when one baby won't suffice, when the challenges the world faces are just too much; and so instead of a great reformer or a few key people, what is needed is a whole generation of leaders.

When the world is broken, a generation is born.

We live in such a world. And you are such a generation.

Gandhi is often credited with saying that you should *be* the change you wish to see in the world. We wonder if he meant literally that you should change the world's problems in yourself? Maybe. But we think he also meant that you should be who you were truly born to be—the best, true, Real You!

Is there anything in the world as powerful as a person who is truly himself? Or herself? Especially when the person is in love with good?

We don't think so.

That is what the teen years are all about—finding the Real You.

## **TEENAGER, GROWN UP OR ADULT?**

If you don't find the Real You, you'll never really grow up. That is why there are a lot of immature people walking around, adults who have never quite figured out who they really are—so they just spend their lives making a living, seeking evening entertainment, wishing they were happy, sometimes seeming in control of their lives for a while but always eventually breaking down and wishing they could get it together.

You may not know it, but in truth many adults are that way. Why? Because they haven't yet figured out who they really are. We know that's a little scary, but we told you we'd give you the truth, the real deal. Here it is: You don't want to be like that when you are fifty, or thirty-eight, or even twenty-three years old. You want to be a true grown up when the time is right—not just an adult.

So it is vital that you figure out who you really are **now**, as a teen. That's what the teen years are for.

In this book, we're going to tell you how to do this.

We have questioned the use of the term "teenager" in the past. This is not because we have any negative thoughts toward your generation. In fact, it is just the opposite. We are so impressed with your generation and with you as individuals that we get frustrated when some adults see your young age and don't expect much out of you.

So we've suggested on many occasions that parents avoid teaching their children to become "teenagers," which society sees as adolescents that behave like spoiled children. We believe that parents should expect a higher standard of youth who are capable of maturity and want to behave like adults.

In this book we are going to use "youth" and "teen" interchangeably. We're doing this with the more mature definition of "young adult" in mind. We are convinced that this is more in keeping with the real, genuine you.

The world today needs what your generation has to share! It needs you to be your real, best self! Those of us in the older generations need your generation to lead out in changing the world!

## **THE YOUTH LEAD THE WORLD**

This may sound backwards at first. Shouldn't the older generations take the lead? Well, in theory, maybe. But in reality there are two truths that we all need to clearly understand if the world is going to improve:

- ❶ The young are usually more idealistic and open to change than their elders.
- ❷ Leadership comes more naturally to those who have had a chief hand in their own education.

These two powerful ideas go together, and the hidden secret in all this is that God/the Universe wants to educate the world! So he sends babies who become teens.

The future will be either a success or a failure, depending on

whether or not today's youth can teach the world what they came here to teach it—before they forget who they are and just care about making a living.

That's deep.

And it's true.

Welcome to TJEEd for Teens!

Now, your parents are your best friends in all of this. Other adults who understand your true potential are also great helps.

## **REALISM OR IDEALISM?**

It always surprises us how some adults tell today's youth that you're a great generation and that you'll do amazing things, and then talk down to you like you're in kindergarten. The truth is that older generations have a lot of wisdom, but they seldom think to share it with you. You should listen to your parents and others who “get it” and who realize just how important you are.

The secret of success for today's youth is to differentiate between the wisdom of older generations and their overly pessimistic “realism.”

Generations of youth that build on the wisdom of the past by adding their idealism and enthusiasm really can change the world for good! But generations where the young people ignore the wisdom of their elders or accept an inheritance of cynical “realism” and “*you-can't-do-it-ism*” fail to live up to their generational mission.

This may seem tricky, and in truth it is complex. You have to mix wisdom with idealism, enthusiasm with the rejection of most realism, and optimism with truly realistic choices. As we said, it's not as simple as many might think. In fact, just look at the kind of world the last four generations of youth have given us as they've grown up and taken charge. There is a lot that's good in the world—more than the nightly news ever admits—but the world also has a lot of problems. Fixing them is hard—*really hard!*—or it would have been done already.



## **THIS IS THE TIME**

Some people see the teen years as a time to play, play, play and have as much fun as possible before taking on these problems; but in truth what could be better than using these years to prepare to fix the challenges of the world? Becoming what you were born to be can be fulfilling and a lot of fun. As we already said, your parents and other adults who understand this are your best friends. The key is for you to let them know where you stand. Sometimes you just want to have fun, and that is great—that's one of the blessings of being a teen. You can sometimes put fixing the world aside and just enjoy life.

Other times you really want to be thinking about and preparing for future leadership, for the time when you are changing the world as you were born to do. As a teen you get to move back and forth between these two.

To get the help and understanding you need, though, you need to let your parents know which of these things you are doing right now. It's okay to just tell them, "I want to be a kid now," and then later say, "Now I want to be an adult." Just be fine with them treating you differently, depending on which life stage you are living right now. They've been there, and they get it. But don't expect your parents to read your mind. Let them know when you want to be a kid, and be happy with them treating you that way. Let them know when you want to be an adult, and then act like it.

But just for the record: There are lots of things out there that cater to the kid in you; this book is written to the young adult in you.

So many things in this world need to be fixed, and God/the Universe has sent many of your generation to do the fixing. You personally have a great role to play in this, and part of the teen years is finding out what that role is.

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR ROLE**

Whatever your role, it will likely be hard. Here is the truth: only a

truly great education will make you ready for the task! Without a truly superb education, very few people are able to figure out what they are supposed to know—how to always tell the difference between wisdom and pessimism, idealism and just being too naïve, and the true, excellent kind of proactive, innovative realism versus its counterfeits.

Great education is usually not formal so if you get a great education it will likely be in addition to school—not because of it. Don't get us wrong; schools have great tools for a superb education. It is just that most school “systems” don't allow you to use the tools optimally.

For example, most schools have libraries, but few allow or encourage students to spend most of their time in the library just reading and thinking. Most schools have some truly great teachers, but few students spend long hours discussing important ideas with these teachers in small groups and medium-size groups of other students—day after day, month after month. Bells, schedules, social cliques and administrative policies get in the way of the really great learning opportunities.

The great wisdom of mankind is found in the works of the greatest men and women who ever lived—from Socrates to Shakespeare, Gandhi to Mother Teresa, Nietzsche to Einstein, Moses to Christ, Buddha to Confucius, Picasso to Bach, Jane Austen to Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr. to Nikola Tesla, Agassiz and Thomas Jefferson, etc.

The list goes on and is thousands of names long. Their writing, composing, painting, equations and so many other works are full of ideas to discuss and argue with, experiments to duplicate and build from, equations to re-work and theories to improve upon—learning the best and worst of the past in order to gain true wisdom, knowledge and understanding. The youth of today are so ready to learn these truths.

Most schools resort to pre-digested textbooks instead of the original, inspiring classics. To get the great education you need, you don't want to settle for anything less than the best!

The overwhelmingly prevalent result of most schools is mediocre education, even at some of the most prestigious institutions. If you want great education, look for great classics, mentors and small group discussions—a lot of them! Find or found schools that emphasize lots of personal reading of the greats, individualized studies, which empower your personal goals and interests, and lots of personalized projects and writing. Look for mentors who will help you achieve your unique life mission by gaining the skills and knowledge you need to become the best you.

## **CONVEYOR BELT VS. GENIUS IN TRAINING**

A mediocre education teaches mostly rote knowledge, while great education significantly develops your ability to think—really think—deeply, broadly, in the short and long terms, creatively and independently. Great education also teaches you to effectively write, speak in public, persuade, initiate, lead, influence and impact.

Conveyor-belt education convinces and trains people to “fit in” whereas Leadership Education helps you develop your natural genius to both follow and lead, alone and in teams.

Let’s get one thing straight right now: there is *genius* in you! This is true. Your best teachers and mentors understand this without anyone telling them. A great education is all about finding your genius, finding who you really are and what you were born to do, and then developing your genius so you have the knowledge, skills and wisdom to be who you were born to be. If you think this doesn’t apply to you, think again—because it does!

We don’t mean by this that anybody is inherently better than anyone else, but that you are just as good as everybody else. You are. Your education is all about becoming the true, genuine, real, best you.

## **DOES PRESTIGE EQUAL QUALITY?**

There is a problem in that some people in the older generations have too often confused what education really is with the name on

a school marquis. You'll encounter the sentiment that the most prestigious schools are the best schools, but that is not always true. The "right" schools for your mission are best, and it is your job to find them. Specifically, it is your role to find the best mentors, classics and studies for you—each at the right time in your life. If one of these happens to be prestigious too, that's great—as long as your criteria is *quality* and what is *right* for your mission.

In fact, if your mission does include time at a celebrated, high-status school, the best way to get your application accepted is to be able to converse freely about the great classical authors and their works, history, art, science, religion etc.—in interviews, on applications and in entrance essays.

And while we'll spend a lot of time here discussing how to get that kind of great preparation, we're not going to focus on institutions—rather we will emphasize great education.

The idea that prestigious schools are the best educators has a long history, but the truth is that graduates from the prestigious institutions simply make more money per capita than grads from other schools. So if your mission and purpose in going to school is to make a lot of money, aiming for prestige might help. But be honest with yourself, and understand that you'll only make money from these degrees if after graduation you spend a lot of your time on the process of making money. If you want to truly change the world, to improve it, your education must be ideal for you.

## **WHAT ABOUT FINANCIAL SUCCESS?**

Now, to be crystal clear, it may be that you were born to make a lot of money, that this is a vital part of your mission. If this is true, entrepreneurship is where the greatest wealth is created. Even those who don't find that formal schooling prepares them well for their mission still need a great education! In fact, the mentored, classical Leadership Education we're promoting here is the kind that many iconically successful entrepreneurs have pursued anyway.

If your mission in life is to be a professional—say, an attorney or a doctor—it may be that prestige is helpful to your mission and right to pursue. If so, nothing will better prepare you for this path later in life than a truly great education in your teens. Prestige schools love applicants with a superb education in the classics and a strong resume of service and achievement.

In short, whether your college and/or graduate school plans end up emphasizing getting more Leadership Education, generating wealth through entrepreneurship, being a great mother or father, engaging a professional career, being an educator, a community leader or something else, we can't think of a better way to prepare in your teen years than getting a quality, mentored education in the greatest classics of mankind!

That's what this book is all about.

## **THE FIRST STEP ON THE PATH TO GREATNESS**

Whatever path you take later, nothing beats a truly great Leadership Education now. Leadership Education—the kind with classics, mentors, lots of discussion, simulations, writing, public speaking, leadership skills and so on—is the best preparation for life! We call this model TJEd, or the Seven Keys; but whatever you call it—get it!

As a teen, of course, you don't have to decide your whole life's path right now. You probably have someone who pays for your food, clothing and housing. If you do have a job, you probably don't have to spend your money on these basic necessities. Your job typically isn't sixty to eighty hours a week like many people on salary or even forty to fifty hours a week like many hourly wage workers. You probably aren't supporting your children who will suffer if you don't make enough.

Most likely you have a great luxury few adults have, something most adults would give almost anything for—you don't have to work most of the time in order to live so you have 8 to 15 hours a day of discretionary time. Even if you are in formal school and have a part-

time job, you still have at least 15 hours a week to study. Most teens have three times that, or more!

*“So what?”* you might ask.

Every generation has its idealists that hope to make the world a better place and solve all our problems for good. We hope that some generation will eventually figure it all out. It will take more than a few people here and there. Nearly every generation has an Einstein, a Hawking, a Churchill or a da Vinci. But it takes a lot more than a sole genius to really fix things. It takes a whole lot of us finding our genius, our best self, our real, genuine purpose in life and then doing it—even though it is hard.

## **FIFTY YEARS FROM NOW**

Hey, by the time you are sixty everybody you know will have had a hard life—health problems, financial setbacks, consequences of dumb choices, marriage struggles, or something. Some people stay healthy and some build great marriages, but nobody is exempt from hardships. Life makes sure of that. So you might as well choose the noble path right now and set out to make the world better. It will be hard, but you’ll end up really making a difference.

In about fifty years you will be old, no matter what. Will you just be old, or will you be old and victorious? Will you have done great things?

Two choices right now will make all the difference. The first is to really listen and follow the wisdom of the wise—whether they are parents, grandparents, church leaders, sages, or whoever. The second is to know how to recognize true wisdom, to separate it from all the other information and to use it well!

We need a generation of leaders, and you were born to be one. One requirement: you must have a great, not mediocre, truly superb education. That’s what your teen years are for: figuring this all out and getting the education to prepare you for leadership.

The truth is that as a teen nothing is as important as finding out

who you really are, discovering what you are supposed to do with your life and then preparing for it! This book is about how to find and develop your genius identity while having fun at the same time.

If you follow the advice in this book, you will greatly succeed in getting a superb Leadership Education! This will lay a commanding groundwork for whatever directions you take later. If you skip this opportunity to get a truly great education, you will miss out on one of the greatest chances of your lifetime. Heed the laments of the adults around you who feel like they are playing “catch-up” with their education while everything in their lives competes with it!

## **THE GENIUS IN YOU**

You have genius in you. We know it, and our purpose in writing this book is to help you find it. Your parents know it, and they want to help you find it and develop it. Others know you have genius and want to help too.

The future of the world depends on your generation finding its genius. Your personal future also depends on you finding it. This really matters.

You were born with a great mission and purpose in this life, just like Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson got a great, world-class Leadership Education in the classics during his teens, and then continued to build on it and use it to make a huge positive difference in the world—throughout his life. His influence is still being felt.

Your purpose is not to copy Thomas Jefferson or anyone else, but to do like he did—find *your* true inner genius, develop it, polish it to levels of greatness and then use it to help the world.

This will be a generational effort, so we hope you will read, discuss and share this book and these ideas with other teens—a lot! The more teens in your generation who choose to get a great Leadership Education, the greater the future will be.

Now, let’s start at the beginning. How can you, and other teens, get a truly superb, great, world-class Leadership Education?

