

Lobo's Laws of Leadership for the 21st Century Community (L3421C2)

**An Unapologetically Incomplete Collection of
the Laws of Leadership**

Major Paul “Lobo” Evans USAF (Ret.)

Lobo's Laws of Leadership for the 21st Century Community (L3421C2)

- Leadership is an art, Not a science
 - There is no perfect formula or list
 - L3421C2 is an amalgamation of a life spent leading, following, and learning how people respond during times of peace and war
 - An attempt to pass on knowledge learned through an unexpectedly full spectrum of life experiences
 - A laundry list of lessons that fit into the “I wish I had known this, then” category: lessons that could, would have been helpful in the past
 - A reflection upon the curiosity, nobility, and viciousness of the human condition – with suggestions for would-be leaders to ponder

Lobo's Laws of Leadership for the 21st Century Community (L3421C2)

● **Law #1. Mission First, People Always**

Teams can, and will achieve great things when all team members know they are cared for, empowered, and trusted. In these instances the Mission becomes personal.

Ref: OPERATION LASER STRIKE (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #2. Passion will be punished

Passion carries significant authority and power; it enables men and women to do and justify doing things nothing else but passion could, even the pursuit of just purposes, carries a cost.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #3. Choose wisdom

Solomon was given the choice of fame, power, or wisdom: he understood that wisdom is power. Leaders value information, perspective, and the wisdom that can only be developed through experience.

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● Law #4. We are never alone

For good or ill, we are never alone. Our spirit (or soul) is forever connected to the larger tapestry of human experience. Even when we seek isolation, we cannot find it completely. Cherish this relationship, steward your choices accordingly.

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● Law #5. Failure sucks

Despite the fact that our best, most enduring lessons often result from our failures, it sucks to fail. It always has and always will. Embrace the suck and seek to make the pain valuable: seek a return on the investment through learning hard lessons the first time.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation of 2006 Oregon Senate Race).

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● Law #6. Friends forgive

Friends may never forget, but real friends will always forgive our trespasses. We all screw the pooch sometimes – and the men and women invested in your life understand it (because they screw up too). Make it right as best you can, learn from the errors involved, treasure the relationship, and return the favor when they screw up.

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● Law #7. Never forget

Although we may forget the specifics, humans have long memories when it comes to being hurt or unappreciated. In life there are people that hurt you because they didn't know better (or couldn't control their actions even if they did), and those that hurt you because they want to. Never forget what people choose to do – especially when done with malicious intent.

Ref: Frog and the Scorpion (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #8. Start firm

There is a reason every class, training program or boot camp drill instructor starts firm: to establish the Rules of Engagement (ROE). People respond best with concrete expectations. Once the trust in the reservoir begins to rise, boundaries can be revisited and refined.

It never hurts to begin a relationship with a clear understanding of what is, what is not, in play.

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● Law #9. Little things count

The atom is small but pretty damn important: many little things make a big thing. Never underestimate the value of “little things.” A smile, a token of appreciation, sometimes even a hug can transform a moment, it can cement a relationship.

Besides, you never know how that “little” act of random kindness may feel to the recipient. An unanticipated, unexpected gift is perhaps not a small thing for them.

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● Law #10. Smart people scare dumb people

Deal with it... Smart people scare dumb people because on our best day humans are still creatures with embedded traits related to survival. Smart people never doubt success – over time. Dumb people are never satisfied if/when it is achieved, and more importantly – never feel valued if it is.

Learn to deescalate tensions when dealing with a dumb person – their ignorance is a valuable “tell” that may inform a path for mutual, even beneficial dealings. Do not allow their paranoia to fuel your own.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #11. Big rocks first

We have all seen the demonstration: a glass jar with an assortment of big, medium, and small sized rocks. If the big rocks don't go first, the others take up too much space for the big rocks to "fit." More importantly, big rocks are heavier and harder to move around – it takes energy that may be finite given your situation. Plan the work, work the plan, and use the power required to move the big pieces into place first.

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◎ Law #12. Monkeys can screw a football

Four second lieutenants spreading camouflage over tactical vehicles in the middle of a rainy windstorm is both a definition of dark comedy – and a life lesson for would-be leaders. With enough time, even a bunch of untrained, unprepared fools can find a way to get something done, but it will be imperfect, take too long, and often provide significant material for YouTube savvy coworkers. Just because you can do something, doesn't always mean you should.

Ref: Exercise Demon Dare 94-03 (In-Class Exercise).

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● Law #13. Plan the work, work the plan

Major “Frack” Firkin USAF (Ret.) taught his subordinates to value “the plan” and make it flexible with options for when things went awry. Plans provide a team with a Rosetta Stone for mission objectives: it provides a place to deviate from when exigencies require it. Once made, teams must be diligent to implement the plan – the objectives, if not the processes.

Ref: Exercise Roving Sands 1995 (In-Class Explanation).

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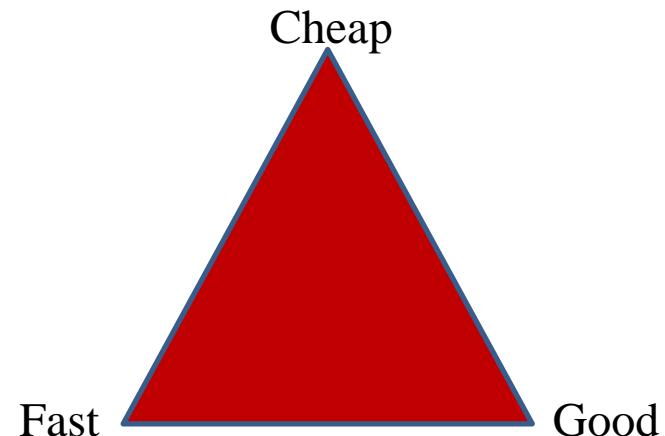
● Law #13. “Everhart’s Quality Triangle Rule”

No Plan can be simultaneously cheap, fast, and well-done: one is always possible, two can be accomplished, but all three is an absolute impossibility:

Cheap and fast, but NOT good

Cheap and good, but NOT Fast

Fast and good, but NOT Cheap



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◎ Law #14. Don't blame a bull for being a bull

Some people are natural-born leaders: these bulls understand the herd through being a bull. A lifetime of interaction with the herd teaches the bull how to meet community expectations.

Don't blame the bull, value its contribution and seek out ways for harnessing the power brought to the team.

Don't be surprised when bulls seek to prove to other bulls they are a bull... it's what they do.

Ref: BG Mike Caldwell's Rule of Power Relationships (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #15. When in doubt, Be Honest

When in doubt, be honest. Leaders and followers must be honest with each other, at all times.

However, outside the family people sometimes seek input and/or perspectives. Be tactful, but be honest.

In the end, the road for recovering from dishonesty is hard, long, and often too far to travel. Why start down that path?

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● Law #16. Crisis is a Gift

Crisis is a gift, perhaps not an enjoyable gift, but a sublime blessing all the same. Good leaders and followers recognize the opportunities inherent any time we are called upon to stretch beyond our comfort – moments when we are provided the authority/responsibility/trust to execute what we have been trained to do.

The exigencies of real crisis cannot be replicated, simulated, nor substituted – attitude is a force-multiplier and crisis must be accepted as something precious – an opportunity.

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● Law #17. Find a Path

Leaders must find a path forward. This is especially important when all the expected challenges were overcome, but the team is faced with an unexpected challenge or obstacle.

The path may not end up in the history books for adherence to strategic or tactical principles, but do whatever necessary to get the mission accomplished with the least possible impact to the team.

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● Law #18. Never TRUST the Cool Kids

The “Cool Kids Club” exists – always has – always will. This group knows they need leaders (and followers) willing to make decisions, absorb responsibilities, and take risks. At times it may even feel as if they care... about the mission, or the team...

They DO NOT CARE, and NEVER will. Many a general thought they were in the “Cool Kids Club” only to find out after retirement they were an expendable asset. Bottom line: Never trust them – they are exactly what they appear to be – little less or more.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #19. GREAT is not always Good

The “GREAT” leaders of history were usually self-absorbed, mean-spirited, psychologically troubled, vindictive people with the means to implement preferred ends – a collision of persona, place, and power.

Few great leaders were good people, fewer were good husbands, wives, friends, or followers.

Ref: World History (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #20. Kings prize the crown most

Power is a magnet: for a select few (the royalty of our society), it is an addiction every bit as destructive in nature as alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

Those with the crown too often prize it above all other things: family, friends, political arrangements, and principle. Never believe a king will put anyone or anything above the crown: be especially weary of the sociopaths claiming they can.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #21. Takers take, it's what they do

There are people (especially in leadership positions) that freely take whatever they can or must without a thought about its cost or a sincere thought about returning a favor.

Do not blame these people for being less or more than they are; learn from it, and find a way to ensure you never count on them for anything, any time, ever.

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● Law #22. Never count on someone else

Even though people can and will surprise you with random acts of kindness, Never count on someone else for what matters most.

We not only sleep alone, we must fight for the right to continue to exist on our own, others are Never as invested in your own survival as You are.

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● Law #23. Celebrate Grace

Life often reveals moments of rare, unanticipated grace: a kindness, a treasured memory, even an undeserved reward. Celebrate the good in all things and cherish it, never waste grace...

Endeavor to treasure good; never waste good. We must find a way to remember the joy in our life – so that when adversity visits it is understood as an interloper, not a new status quo.

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● Law #24. Never date a Colleague

We all know it is a bad idea; we all know the risks far outweigh the reward even if the relationship works.

Teams cannot long remain teams when any members are romantically involved; the team will suffer as a result – this is as proven as it is predictable.

Ref: OPERATION POKER BUFF II (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #25. Love is Never free – or cheap

There are many ways to convey this reality, but the most appropriate may be this: love is an emotion that imperfectly connects our rational self with our irrational self. With another attempting to do the same it is a risky business, on a good day.

Neither cheap, nor easy, nor free, love is a hard-won experience requiring constant emotional maintenance and up-keep.

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- Law #26. Remember why you Trekked into the Swamp...

Grandpa was right: it is extremely hard to drain the swamp when you are up to your ass in alligators: focus on what the problem is in order to drain the swamp – then the alligators must fight on your turf (or go away).

Ref: OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM 2006/7 (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #27. Never trust a Deaf frog

Remember the scientist that used a “shout & jump” test to measure the hearing of frogs.

The scientist would cut a leg off, shout “jump,” and measure the distance traveled. He repeated the procedure until the frog had no legs remaining.

Confounded when the frog refused to jump after losing all four legs, he concluded the frog had become “deaf.”

Perhaps there is a more likely conclusion available?

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- Law #28. There are always at least three (3) points of view:

Yours, Theirs, and What actually happened.

We are incapable of objectivity; knowing this is a critical factor in mature leadership decision-making.

Sometimes referred to as the “Mother-in-Law” Rule:

Your side, her side, and what the Mother-in-Law believes to be the truth

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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◎ Law #29. Saints and Sinners – All

Humans on our best days are still sinners, on our worst days still part saint.

Don't allow yourself the empty, hollow comfort of accepting the “monster model” that differentiates between them and us. We are all humanity, warts and all.

Ref: OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (In-Class Explanation).

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- Law #30. Sometimes the prostitute really did see the killing

Courtroom gamesmanship aside, we must remember that sometimes the most unbelievable, unlikely – least credible person actually did see or do something unexpected.

Good leaders understand how to evaluate data without allowing prejudices to interfere.

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● Law #31. Myth endures

Humans connect with stories that tell truths, if not the truth itself; we invest community and culture values in vessels called myth – in order to preserve them and enshrine our virtues in an enduring presence. Myths are powerful, powerful tools for leadership.

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◎ Law #32. Perception IS Reality

Even though it sucks sometimes, the line between perception and reality is almost irrelevant in modern society. The internet transforms even an obvious fabrication and manufactured crisis into a real crisis.

Never underestimate the value of managing perceptions as a part of your leadership duties.

Ref: 2008 Congressional Campaign (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #33. Sometimes it's You

Sometimes YOU really are the problem. Learn to recognize it, deal with it, and learn from it.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #33.5. Sometimes it's Not [you]

Sometimes YOU really aren't the problem, but someone needs it to appear that you are. Try to figure out who needs you to be identified as a problem and your life will get easier.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #34. Never expect Mercy

Whether or not you practice it, seasoned leaders know that an opponent may be unable or unwilling to show mercy: mortal combat should be the assumption every time you enter the ring.

Ref: OPERATION SUPPORT JUSTICE IV (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #44. Gibbs' Failsafe

Gibbs' Rule [From NCIS, the show] Hide the family.

- * Sometimes a good rule is a good rule, even if made famous by a television show. During times of significant danger – knowing your family is safe is a powerful force-multiplier.

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● Law #45. They didn't elect the police chief

When receiving a call from a frustrated constituent about a loud neighborhood party in the early morning remember: they are calling you because they trust you to get something done. They elected You, they didn't elect the police chief.

Ref: Community Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #47. Coach the Team

A leader should coach the team. Experienced leaders seek to make themselves largely irrelevant in the routine aspects of the job – in order to focus upon developing the harmonics of the team itself.

Build leadership into the job expectations of each, every role so that the team is learning how to operate with less and less guidance from the coach.

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● Law #48. Technology is The Antichrist

Technology will screw you. Maybe not today, or tomorrow, but someday. Always have a backup plan for making the situation function absent the technology you think success depends upon.

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● Law #49. All critical skills are perishable

Human beings learn and unlearn skill-sets. Skills are perishable and must be managed as any other vital asset. Practice your skills occasionally, or accept the loss.

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- Law #53. Fight [Only] when necessary, but fight to win

War – the organized function of fighting – should always be the final, last option when facing crisis. Fight when necessary, but seek to avoid it. Once all other alternatives have been exhausted destroy the enemy without conscience, hesitation, or mercy. Mortal combat should be understood as a last, least favorable resort.

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● Law #55. Shane had to leave

Myth consistently reminds us that the temporary savior of today, is the dirty, tainted anti-hero of tomorrow. After Shane saved the town the townsfolk were uncomfortable: he had demonstrated power and resolve beyond their understanding and control.

Heroes cannot live happily ever after in the peaceful countryside; once tainted by combat, even for righteous purpose, heroic actions transform the relationship between the one and the many. Heroes are extraordinary, subject to existence outside the ordinary.

* The Movie “Shane” was a western thriller where the hero came from out of town, defeated the villain, and left town afterwards – because people were afraid of him.

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- Law #56. Let them say or write whatever they must as long as they spell your name right

Reputations are important but not always for the reasons we believe. Simply put, our reputation is the sum total of all things said, thought, or written.

Accept the world as it is – full of troubled people seeking to share in the light (albeit reflected) of fame. Let people spread what they must – ensuring they spell your name right.

Remember: the folks that remain on the stage the longest have a complex, enduring narrative. In the end the aggregate will smooth out the rough edges.

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● Law #57. Never grab the goat left-handed

Cultural expectations and rules are important to know before you confront the “awkward moment.” Know your audience, know the spoken and unspoken things in order to facilitate greater understanding and stronger relationships; seek to prevent costly missteps whenever, wherever possible.

Ref: OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH 1996 (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #58. Write three letters

Remember the story of Khrushchev and the three letters: the proven method of succession and organizational success during difficult times.

The letters: 1) blame Stalin; 2) reorganize; and 3) write three letters.

Ref: Community Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #59. Just make the Friggin Call!

Eventually you must make a decision, even if you aren't absolutely certain that it's the best alternative (sometimes there aren't alternatives). In these cases, make the call and live with the consequences. You can always adjust, but standing still is usually the worst alternative under fire.

Ref: EXERCISE DEMON DARE 93-03 (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #61. Reach for the nails

Anticipatory followership is best explained like this: when you see the leader reaching for a hammer, you reach for the nails – to make the job more effective, efficient.

Think through what must be done, and begin the process of preparing for what must happen to make it successful.

Ref: Sgt WA Evans USMC (Retired).

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● Law #62. Ask for forgiveness

We mess up – some of us mess up a lot. When we do, apologize and ask for forgiveness. Don't be a jerk and do it half-ass – if you're sorry about something make it personal, real, and do it right.

In the end, people respect accepting blame for mistakes; nobody was ever weakened because of an earnest apology.

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- Law #63. Never tell the French they aren't a Superpower

Self-image is a powerful force in the universe. Even the French – who should know better – don't like to hear the truth when it's offered as a constructive criticism. Bottom line: don't embarrass people when you don't need to.

Ref: OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH 1996 (In-Class Explanation).

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● Law #64. Silence rarely gets you fired

There are moments when silence is the better course of action. Think before you speak, and speak when you know it will improve the silence. Don't assume empty space in a conversation is an invitation for added dialogue. Allow the situation to unfold.

Remember the story of Churchill and how the great silence (of this great orator) gave the world the best Prime Minister in English history.

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- Law #66. Never pick a fight you don't want to win

Sometimes it's easy to seize an objective; make sure it's an objective worth seizing. There is no reason to fight for something you have no need for. Even though the objective may not be important to you, it may be to someone else, and they may be willing to expand the fight.

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● Law #67. Always shoot to kill

If you're going to aim a weapon at someone, do it with purpose: shoot to kill. Don't try to be cute and wound an enemy – there is no guarantee they would do anything but shoot you to death if circumstances were reversed.

Determine the course of action before you raise your weapon.

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● Law #69. All power is temporary

Humans are ephemeral beings. We live mortal existences and in the brief period given, we are always subject to the rules of time.

When granted authority and power use it wisely; know that sooner than you believe possible it will be time to hand it over. Be a good steward of the responsibilities given and make your stewardship matter.

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● Law #71. Strong leaders want strong followers

Strong leaders select strong followers because they recognize the need for dynamic leadership throughout an organization – and because they are not afraid of big personalities.

Weak leaders surround themselves with timid souls that can be controlled easily. These leaders do themselves no service: weak followers will retreat from instances where truth must be told to power.

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- Law #72. Backstabbers don't always look the part

Be weary of the backstabbers. They usually don't look like a threat, until the knife is squarely in your back and they whisper in your ear it was them.

Always consider the circumstances and be aware of why people are acting the way they are, there is always a reason – always.

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- Law #73. CNN shouldn't be the one to inform the boss about a mess

Good followers are vigilant. When there is news, especially bad news, it should be shared with the boss as quickly as it can be accurately shared.

Ref: OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH 2001 (In-Class explanation).

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◎ Law #77. Clean up your own mess

We all make mistakes. Leaders own them and resolve the consequences associated with them. People respect it when you seek to clean up the mess you created; some will even help if/when asked.

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- Law #81. Never buy a used car from someone named Chip

Be weary of “slick” salesmen – they profit from your purchase, not your satisfaction with the purchase over time – it’s a subtle point.

If it feels or sounds too good to be true, it isn’t true. These folks will knowingly sell you a wreck if they have to, so remember it’s a purchasing relationship, not a friendship.

Ref: State Capitol Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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◎Law #82. Speak softly but carry a knife

Teddy Roosevelt got it almost right – speak softly and carry a knife, not a stick. You should be prepared for mortal contest always.

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- Law #83. Sometimes it takes more than a gentle wash

There are circumstances that require more than a quick wash or a scrubbing. Leaders accept the burdens of fixing a problem rather than learning to live with it – or worse, appearing to fix the problem.

Complex issues require complex, well-thought-out remedies.

Ref: Community Politics (In-Class Explanation).

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- Law #84. The most dangerous person is the person with the least to lose; these people are dangerous, petty

“Frack” Firkin used to emphasize this rule: the most dangerous enemy isn’t the wounded, cornered enemy – you know they have a desperate need for action.

The most dangerous, is the person with nothing left to loose – nothing left to live for – the person to which petty things are the only things they have some sense of control over.

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● Law #85. Keiko the Killer Whale – Only in America

Americans spent millions of \$US to “save” a killer whale from Mexico: from Mexico to Oregon, to the Arctic Ocean – after five (5) years of retraining.

An amazing investment of talent, time, and treasure poured into the process of preparing a captured whale for reintroduction into the wilds because the human heart was touched by the unfairness of the enterprise.

Once released, the whale died of loneliness.

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- Law #88. Never trust someone who cannot trust anyone.

People that cannot trust are not worthy of trust.

Never turn your back on someone that is incapable of placing trust into the hands of another person.

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● Law #91. Respect must be earned

Money can buy things. Titles can buy you opportunities. Academic degrees can buy you tenure. Respect is something that cannot be bought, it must be earned – it must be sustained – of, by, and for the team.

Respect matters, it is the currency of trust.

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● Law #92. Inspire the Tribe

Leaders must inspire the tribe. Whatever talents a leader may possess, they must be able to communicate in a manner that elevates the spirit of the tribe and its membership. Leadership is the art of moving people to action, and inspiration is a better, stronger motivator than fear or humiliation.

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● Law #93. Leave a living legacy

Strong leaders leave a living legacy – something that is bigger, faster, stronger, and more universal than when they began. It is legacy that connects us to one another, it is a shared sense of mission – of interrelatedness in it's pursuit.

Seek to facilitate an evolving, growing, living organization that inspires a new generation to action.

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● Law #94. Own your choices

Choices can be good, bad, or ugly – but leaders own them all. No excuses, no projections of blame onto others; leaders know the stakes and make the best decisions possible with the information available in defined circumstances.

Celebrate your choices, even the bad ones, there is a value in knowing now what you didn't or couldn't know then.

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● Law #99. Make your own list

Leaders learn how to lead through action. Seek out opportunities to lead. Some of these will result in success. A few will be failures. Whatever the case, learn from these experiences and keep a list of what matters and why.

Pass it onto the next generation so that they may prosper – even a little – from your contributions to the larger dialogue.