

BUILD A 'BREADCRUMB LEGACY'

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The Sages honored this year have created a legacy that should inspire us all. Our community benefits from their ongoing contributions.

But what is really meant by legacy? Often, it's connected with fame, fortune or major accomplishments. Legacy has become a common expression associated with professional athletes since

they tend to retire before most people as they "age out" of their profession. There are several common myths related to legacy:

- It's for the rich and famous.
- It's only for people who are accomplished and influence history.
- It's only for people who have kids.
- It happens at the end of life.
- It's something we can't control because it is based on what other people think of us.
- It's always favorable.
- It represents a big win.

But if we live for the big wins, we often live with disappointment, disengagement and demotivation. Rather, our legacy is made up of small actions, decisions and

behaviors that take place on a daily basis. I refer to this as "breadcrumb legacy" because these small actions add up to form a legacy that lasts and lives beyond ourselves. Breadcrumb legacy is the inverse of the myths we often believe:

- It's for everyone.
- It's based on the small everyday acts and decisions we often take for granted.
- It's for people who have or do not have children.
- It's something that happens daily whether we are aware of it or not.
- It's something we can control, and we can influence what people think about us.
- It's not always favorable!
- As explained above, it's made up of small actions, not big wins.

One of the main myths of legacy is that it happens at the end of life—when we leave. But I like to ask: When we leave what? When we die? When we leave a profession? When we leave a job? With breadcrumb legacy, we are leaving an effect—our "breadcrumbs"—when we leave every conversation, interaction and meeting. I am leaving some of my breadcrumbs in this article.

The key is to be aware of the impact we are having on a daily basis, favorable or not. Breadcrumb legacy is for all of us now—right now. What are the crumbs we are leaving behind? When we engage breadcrumb legacy, we are thinking about the future. We are being intentional about how we want to be remembered on a daily basis with each "crumb" we leave. The crumbs add up, and we should want to leave a trail behind us that is valuable and long-lasting. Now is the time to think about the impact we are having on our family, colleagues, peers and friends through the breadcrumbs we leave along the way, each and every day. ■

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