Carrie Rich

Creating Lives of Purpose

Carrie Rich understood from a young age that we build legacy with the help of other people. When her father asked what gift she might like to commemorate her high school graduation, she asked him to answer questions in a notebook entitled *The Principles Book of Fatherly Wisdom: A Father's Journal of Timeless Advice.*

Within the book were questions for the ages, such as 'How do you view success?'

"Success is the dividing line between courage and stupidity," Carrie's father wrote. "If a

person succeeds at accomplishing a daring mission, we call her brave; if the same person fails trying to achieve the same goal, we call her an idiot, and we ask how she could have been so stupid as to try stuff like that."

Carrie re-reads that book twice a year, she says, and she measures her choices against her father's principles.

When she was in college,
Carrie developed the habit of
approaching fascinating strangers for advice. "I
had a list of ten questions I'd ask anyone who
would speak with me. I'd find fascinating people,
email them, and ask for fifteen minutes of their
time. Every person I spoke with had a powerful
story to share with lessons I learned from and
applied to my life. I sent a hand-written thank-you
note after each conversation." To this day, when
things aren't going well in Carrie's life, she turns
the tide by writing thank-you notes. "There's so
much to be grateful for," she says.

One of the people Carrie interviewed was Knox Singleton, CEO of Inova Health System. Their conversation eventually led to partnership in a venture called The Global Good Fund, which matches enterprising young people with seasoned executives in mentoring relationships.

Carrie acknowledges that our legacies are sometimes influenced by encounters with people we come across less intentionally—like the man

who collapsed before her one day when she was just sixteen.

Carrie was attending a week-long program at Georgetown University for high school students who hoped to be doctors. The program rotated students through several stations, showing them components of the system that's supposed to maintain or restore a person's health. One of those stations was a soup kitchen, where the budding health-care professionals served lunch to some of the poorest people in Washington, D.C. After that

meal, which was funded in part by grants from the city, Carrie watched a man from her table use a pass he had received from one of the city's aid agencies to board a bus and disappear into the turmoil of hunger and poverty. That night, after the aspiring doctors had shifted to their hospital rotation, the man from Carrie's table stumbled into the emergency room and collapsed under the weight of chronic illness and exhaustion.

Watching that man struggle for survival made it clear to Carrie that the system he depended on was broken, and that becoming a surgeon was not the right solution for Carrie to fix such big problems. If she wanted to help people like him, she had to address the complex social problems that make him sick. The most effective vehicle for addressing society's most complex challenges is leadership, she believes.

Carrie went home from her immersion in the summer program and told her parents she was going to study health administration at Georgetown University. They said, "Honey, start saving," Carrie recalls, which she took to mean: the opportunity to change the system is something you have to create for yourself. That may have been a daunting prospect to most high school juniors, but Carrie grew up in an environment where that's what people did: they led things.

The events that produced The Global Good Fund look like coincidences, but they arose

out of thoughtfully constructed circumstances. To complete her master's degree in Health Systems Administration, Carrie was required to serve an internship under a seasoned health professional. The mentor she was working with departed for a promotion elsewhere, so Carrie asked the hospital to give her whatever work they had available. "I pushed the snack cart, I folded baby clothes in the maternity ward - the lowest-level tasks you could possibly do in a health care environment. Here I was paying a whopping fee for graduate school to get my degree from Georgetown University, and I was mopping the floor-happily so! I think some people believe that a fairy taps you on the shoulder and that's what opportunity looks like," Carrie says, "but opportunity looks like hard work. Opportunity looks like mopping the floor."

She was also required to take attendance at staff meetings, which meant that everyone who walked into the room had to give her their names. One day she noticed the arrival of a person who caused other professionals to sit up straighter. She researched that person and discovered that he was the CEO of Inova, a multi-billion-dollar health organization. For three decades, he had grown Inova while concurrently helping to grow a non-profit organization devoted to improving the health care system in Haiti.

"Clearly this guy cares about giving back to the world," she concluded. "So I wrote to his executive assistant, saying 'I know Mr. Singleton has 16,000 employees and I'm just the intern, but I'd really like to have a conversation with him about how to build a life of meaning and purpose.' My rationale was that since everybody comes to talk to him about health care, he might appreciate conversation about building legacy."

She was right: he agreed to meet with her. donned her most serious business Carrie demeanor and went to his office to talk about legacy. "We had an inspiring conversation," Carrie recalls, "and at the end I realized this was one of those people you want to keep in your life. What could I say that would give us a reason to work together for years to come? I asked if he would write a book with me-keep in mind that I was wearing my dark suit and being very serious the whole time. He said 'Sure, what will we write about?' And I just lost all composure! I said, 'Oh, this is so cool! What will we write about?' And he said, 'Well, I thought you had an idea.' We worked on the book with another co-author for three years.

He pontificated about health care and we translated his vision. Eventually he created a position for me called Director of Vision Translation at Inova, and that ultimately led to cocreating The Global Good Fund."

Carrie wanted to use her position of privilege to make the world a better place, and she realized that the support and guidance of people like Knox Singleton had helped her grow much faster than she would have grown on her own. She began to imagine how much good work could be accomplished globally if more people like her had mentors like him.

"It turns out that there are thousands of people in the world who are using business for good," Carrie says. "They are humble and coachable enough to realize that they need help. Our premise became: how can we create a non-profit organization that's financially viable and does good for the world?"

The first step was to build an advisory board of seasoned executives to recruit potential mentors, then pair those mentors with emerging young leaders who sought to pursue entrepreneurship for social good.

"When we grow the leader, the leader grows the business, and the business positively impacts society," Carrie says. "We connected through social media and found the good in people—you hear every day about what's rotten in the world, but this is about finding what's good and scaling it, giving it a global platform, providing access to targeted capital, and growing the leadership of young social entrepreneurs."

Since 2013, The Global Good Fund has worked with 70 young leaders in more than 30 countries. Each year, The Global Good Fund receives more than 2,000 applications for its 12 fellowship positions. With new projects focusing on entrepreneurship among military veterans and job creation for people over the age of fifty, the fund expects to quadruple its fellowships in 2018.

"The Global Good Fund seeks to support financially viable entities that do good for the world, so it's important that we're also financially viable," Carrie says. "The goal is to cover at least fifty percent of our operating costs through earned income, and the way we do that is we white label our model to companies and family foundations that care about a particular social cause. We use our fellowship model to source entrepreneurs who tackle those causes, and we provide quarterly

updates about the leadership growth, business growth, and social impact of those enterprises."

"I had to learn how to leverage other people and borrow their credibility to build The Global Good Fund," Carrie says. "The first year we were run entirely by volunteers, working nights and weekends. The person who chaired our executive mentor network was a volunteer. The person who ran our fellowship program was a volunteer. Operations at our annual summit were managed by volunteers—nobody knew that we didn't have paid staff members. We've always punched bigger than we are. About a year in, our board sat me down and said, 'Someone needs to lead this operation formally. Are you going to be the leader, or should we hire someone else?'"

At that time, Carrie was working at Inova Health System. "I figured health care would always be there, whereas this opportunity would not be," Carrie says. "So I took a pay cut and jumped out of the airplane without a parachute — I built the parachute on the way down, which is exactly what we ask of our social entrepreneurs. It's been a meaningful, purposeful ride. All of the things that matter in life, I have. To be inspired the way I am and to give inspiration to other people — that's the great joy of The Global Good Fund."

Carrie learned the practice of joy from her parents. "My dad gets joy out of moments that are not joyful," Carrie says. "You know when you're in an elevator and everyone is awkwardly silent or staring at their phones? My dad whistles. He understands that you don't need a vacation to experience joy. I try to emulate him in that way, minus the whistling."

Both of Carrie's parents were federal employees working in Health and Human Services; they prioritized personal goals over professional ambitions while taking professional responsibilities very seriously," she explains. "They built a balanced life. They wanted my sister and me to know that we came first," Carrie says.

That life of balance revolved around the dinner table, where Carrie's mother served a carefully planned meal every night, and the family relationships were nourished by good food and conversation about what mattered in life: service to others.

Carrie grew up in Wellesley Massachusetts, attending public schools and participating in a highly structured set of afterschool activities. "I was never the best athlete, she says, "but I was picked to be captain of the team, and I'd wonder why. Clearly there were better athletes than me. Eventually I realized that I worked as hard or harder than anyone else and had a positive attitude. I picked myself up when others stayed down, and I picked others up no matter what. That mentality was rewarded. My mother and father are extremely disciplined," Carrie says.

"You have to be awfully disciplined to work full-time and prepare a home-cooked meal every day, and be present for soccer games and piano recitals on top of it all. My parents have always been present and joyful for their children—that takes real discipline. I learn a lot about discipline and hard work from my parents, and about what matters in life."

"Growing up, we did not travel internationally as a family," Carrie says, though she found ways to travel independently to Jamaica and Mexico as a teenager through community service and educational opportunities. "My parents could afford the place we lived because they shared a car for a while. I was not exposed to a global world firsthand. The focus was clearly the education and hard work that lay directly before us. That was the main message."

Extra credit in school was never extra for Carrie; it was expected by her parents. "It's amazing the credit you get for simply following through as an adult—writing thank you notes, doing what you say you'll do, following up by email. In my mind, that's not extra, that's expected. That's the way I was raised."

She sometimes wondered why her parents weren't more ambitious professionally, but eventually she realized that they were doing extra in other areas of their lives that mattered more. "They did extra in terms of meal preparation—every single night of the week. They did not miss a single event—soccer game, recital, religious event, girl scout event, they were present, really present, even though they were busy. Wherever I am now, I try to be truly present in what I'm doing."

Carrie completed conventional religious training for Jewish young adults, then continued beyond the standard level of involvement. "Once you have your bat mitzvah you can opt to stop attending Hebrew School, but I decided to teach in Sunday school and continued formal learning during the week as well," Carrie says. "My religious upbringing helped provide grounding

values. I've noticed that I'm attracted to working with people who have strong value systems."

During her college years at Lehigh University, Carrie worked as a Resident Assistant to help pay for school, and she participated in several clubs. She was the first Caucasian member of the Step Team, which later became one of the most ethnically diverse organizations on campus -"Other people told me that 'if the palest redhead could fit in, then anyone could join," she says. She finished college in three years and accepted a friend's invitation to stay with family in India where she functioned as an independent observer studying the health care system. From India she continued to Africa, where she saw the challenges women faced in developing countries and realized that handouts were not the most effective response to poverty.

"I learned about health care, and I learned about people," Carrie says. "I learned that what people want for their children is the same, no matter where they are in the world. Whether people live in poverty or excessive privilege, we want safety and education for our children, health for our grandparents, and a clean environment for ourselves and our neighbors. It boils down to shared values."

After completing her master's degree in Health Systems Administration at Georgetown University, Carrie worked full-time at Perkins+Will where she'd worked while attending graduate school. She then became Director of Vision Translation at Inova, where she worked with Knox Singleton and another colleague on a book that was published in 2012 under the title Sustainability for Healthcare Management: A Leadership Imperative, now in its second edition.

Carrie says, "People in my life have communicated to me, through words or actions, 'I believe in you.' That's the most important message a young person needs to hear." One of the ways Knox Singleton communicated that belief to Carrie was by giving her a quote from John Wesley: "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, for all the people you can, for as long as you ever can."

That's the premise behind The Global Good Fund.

"For a year, The Global Good Fund hosted dinner parties every month in people's homes," Carrie explains. "People invited their friends and we'd talk about living a life of purpose. We weren't fund-raising at those events, we were friend-raising. I'm twenty-six years old at this point—I don't have much of a network, so I'm just trying to meet people and learn what it takes to live a life of purpose. Everyone has a story they can tell about other people making a difference in their lives; that's what we talked about."

The Global Good Fund launched with five fellows its first year, and then six the next year, then eight, twelve, and now thirty-eight this year. "My goal is to support one hundred social entrepreneurs annually," Carrie says.

Carrie married Darren Margolis in 2014, and they have two children. "We knew we wanted to get married the week we met," she says. "My mother wanted us to wait, but I just wanted to marry him. I had nothing to prove to anyone about Darren. He is who he is, and I love him just that way."

Carrie says that her roles as a parent of two young children and a professional on a global stage would not be possible without Darren. She travels – sometimes with children in tow, she works a lot, and she takes risks. "Darren is my rock," she says. "He's supportive of my risk taking. Darren runs his own business, so he understands entrepreneurship. He has his own passions, knows right from wrong, and most importantly, we laugh a lot together."

Carrie takes pride in being present for her family, just as her parents were present for her and her sister.

She has warmed to the idea that she is a leader who brings people together. "My boss in architecture and design told me that I'm the glue," she says. "And my boss in health care told me that I'm the blood. A little odd, but I get it, I pull it together. I unite people."

Her advice to young people starting a career would be to invest in themselves. "You have to invest in yourself before anyone will invest in you," Carrie says. "Be as educated as you can be. Get your finances straight. Put your resources where your mouth is. Follow through on what you say you're going to do, do it in a way that builds you and something great for the world."

And never under-estimate the importance of mopping the floor.

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- By Gordon J. Bernhardt, CPA, PFS, CFP®, AIF®

About Gordon J. Bernhardt
President and founder of Bernhardt Wealth
Management and author of Profiles in Success:
Inspiration from Executive Leaders in the
Washington D.C. Area, Gordon provides financial
planning and wealth management services to affluent

individuals, families and business-owners throughout the Washington, DC area. Since establishing his firm in 1994, he and his team have been focused on providing high-quality service and independent financial advice to help clients make informed decisions about their money. For more information, visit www.BernhardtWealth.com and Gordon's Blog.

