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The Leadership Pilgrimage: How a Virtual Pilgrimage Transforms Leaders

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Leadership is a journey. However, few leaders embark on the type of journey that fosters greatness. That journey is best described as a pilgrimage, a leadership pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a sacred journey with a purpose, one that requires vision, focus, and perseverance to complete. During the pilgrimage, pilgrims share a common experience: enlightenment through solitude and sacrifice. The Camino de Santiago is such a journey. It is a powerful metaphor for a leadership pilgrimage: a self-reflective journey leading to leadership enlightenment. This paper explores the impact of a virtual pilgrimage on the Way of St. James on leaders as they study five parallels between the Way of St. James and corporate leadership development. The Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage was created during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of this writing, the first group of participants is enrolling. They will provide feedback regarding how transformative the Virtual Pilgrimage has been to their leadership experience. Our goal is to combine leadership development with the experience of walking the Way of St. James. Participants, like pilgrims, should stretch themselves in both body and spirit as they travel on their road to personal enlightenment. The virtual experience will mimic the pilgrimage experience through course materials, exercises, reflection, and following the Way of St. James virtually. As they do so, participants will experience the type of enlightenment that pilgrims experience on the Way of St. James.

Key Words: leadership values, leadership purpose, leadership legacy, leadership focus, leadership perseverance, leadership pilgrimage

Introduction:

The Pilgrimage and Leadership

A pilgrimage is a transformative experience for the pilgrim. Perhaps that is why the pilgrimage tradition is interwoven throughout world history, in almost every culture and religious tradition (Coleman, n.d.). There have been countless pilgrims throughout history, each one interconnected with their fellow pilgrims by common values and a shared quest, that of discovering answers to both personal and societal travails by separating themselves from the larger culture and committing themselves to an incredible sacrificial journey to faraway lands and locations they consider sacred. I say *sacrificial journey* because a pilgrimage is more than just a trip to a place on a map of mythical or religious importance; it is also, and more importantly, a journey to an inner destination etched in the hearts, minds, and even in the depths of each individual's and collective pilgrims' souls. That inner destination is reached through the efforts and sacrifice the pilgrim makes during their journey. Pilgrims forge ahead with genuine focus, meaning, direction, vision, and purpose.

Historically, pilgrims were drawn together from diverse walks of life, yet they were entwined by their shared and singular vision, drive, and passion to achieve something that others around them at the time, and certainly by today's standards, thought peculiar, different, eccentric, and strange, for pilgrims were driven, pulled, and compelled to travel incredible distances, at great personal risk, to a destination they considered sacred. They also believed that through their sacrifice in getting to that destination, they would achieve enlightenment.

Even though pilgrims may be mostly remembered for the physical journeys they accomplished, it is their inner vision, shared core values, and willingness to take on incredible risk and sacrifice because of their shared values that may be most memorable and important for us to consider as they relate to leadership development. Their values, their vision, and their personal motivation to do something extraordinary set them apart from others and makes them worthy of our consideration, as we strive to maximise our inner potential as leaders. It is their shared fundamental values and beliefs that compelled

them to make incredibly long, challenging, solitary, and yet extraordinarily impactful journeys. Their legacy is a bequest to us today.

Solitude and time for reflection are other aspects of the pilgrimage that leaders today can profit from, just as pilgrims of old did. This may especially be true since we live in a time when dedicating and separating ourselves from others to complete a solitary physical and mental journey of reflection would seem odd to most people. Most leaders discover that it is difficult to find even a few minutes of quiet time for self-reflection and thought, or strategic planning and review, in their chaotic daily schedules—much less actually separate themselves for weeks or months at a time to dedicate themselves to a physical and inward journey for a higher purpose.

It may be easy for us to dismiss ancient pilgrims and their drive to go on a pilgrimage. We may be tempted to think that life was different then. Perhaps getting away was easier for someone hundreds of years ago. Maybe they did not have the commitments we have today. Yet this was not the case. Just like we have today, pilgrims of old had daily lives, jobs, vocations, careers, families, communities, and friends that placed demands on their time—not to mention the fact that many of them risked life and limb by walking long distances to strange lands, at a time when robbers and warring kingdoms were encountered as well as disease and injury (Dunn & Davidson, 2000). Still, they were willing to put all that aside, pick up the pilgrim's staff, and dedicate themselves to completing a challenging physical and mental journey.

Some may say that part of the excitement and draw of a pilgrimage had to do with travel, that it was a type of medieval vacation. But travel alone is not what motivated pilgrims to action. For not only were they motivated to travel to a distant location that held significance to them, they also believed that through their intense physical and mental sacrifice, and through hours of self-reflection and thought they would have along the way, in the end, they would achieve something they could not attain in any other way—enlightenment. Throughout their long, difficult, and solitary journeys, they kept this focus and purpose forefront in their minds and etched in their hearts, even in times of extreme pain and / or difficulty.

Pilgrims recognised that sacrifice and reflection were the real value of making the journey in the first place. Indeed, they believed that through sacrifice and reflection, they

would gain a level of insight and understanding otherwise impossible for them to achieve. In fact, in most traditions, pilgrims believed the sacrifice would lead to a release or absolution from sin and / or suffering and the attainment of personal enlightenment. This tradition continues to this day.

It might be easy to dismiss the sacrifice as the struggles of a few eccentric religious zealots, people who might otherwise have been forgotten or remembered only as a footnote of historical and cultural curiosity. However, that is not the case. In fact, through the ages, millions of pilgrims have not only experienced personal enlightenment but collectively have left an incalculable impact on the legacy of their communities, churches, orders, countries, and even the world. This legacy is the reason why the Way of St. James has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<https://vivecamino.com/en/camino-de-santiago-why-is-it-a-world-heritage-site-no-509/>):

- The Camino de Santiago was created to meet the needs of pilgrims (covering churches, hospitals, shelters, bridges, and all kinds of structures) and it bears witness to the evolution of art and architecture between the Romanesque and Baroque periods. The Jacobean trade route that developed in the Middle Ages played a crucial role in the bidirectional exchange of cultural advances between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe, leading its commercial activities to the growth of the northern cities of the Iberian Peninsula.
- UNESCO highlights the richness of the cultural heritage that emerged on the Camino, marking the birth of Romanesque art and presenting extraordinary examples of Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque art.
- The Camino pilgrimage routes have continued to function for more than a thousand years, with most of them still following their original trajectories and many retaining their historical characteristics, without unduly suffering from the adverse effects of development or neglect.
- The Camino de Santiago is valued as a remarkable testimony of the power and influence of faith among people of all social classes and origins in medieval Europe, preserving a complete material record of all extant Christian pilgrimage routes.

We might be tempted to view the pilgrims as insignificant individuals, for few of their names are remembered in

history, yet when massed together by their common and core values and vision, together they created an enduring legacy for future generations to venerate and to follow. If these were just the futile wonderings of a few dreamers, then it would be very unlikely that they ever could have had much impact on the world of their age, not to mention the legacy they left to world history.

The Link to Leadership

As the owner of Magnify Leadership and Development, a leadership development company dedicated to helping individuals, teams, and organisations magnify and reach their full potential, I have often reflected on how my career and life can be seen as a series of journeys, driven from within by interests, values, and motives. I describe these interests or areas of focus as journeys because each can be seen as different paths I have followed throughout my life. Perhaps you can see paths you have followed throughout your life that can be described as journeys as well. For me, these journeys included:

1. A love for Spanish language and culture, enhanced by over nine years of studying, living, and working in Puerto Rico and Spain;
2. An interest in how history impacts our lives;
3. An appreciation for nature; and
4. My career goal and purpose to better understand and teach others about how to magnify their impact as leaders.

Each of these journeys had different paths that I picked up and followed at different times of my life.

My path to learning and speaking Spanish began when I served on a mission for my church in Puerto Rico and continued as I studied the language in college; it expanded as I studied abroad at the University of Salamanca in Spain. Throughout my life, I exerted the effort to stay fluent in a language and culture that I loved, until I finally had the chance to live and work in Madrid for several years.

My love for history was spawned by high school teachers who taught me how US and world history impact our lives today. Each place I visited came alive for me as I delved into its history. Places like Plymouth Rock, the Mormon Trail, Delphi, Egypt, Istanbul, the Great Wall of China, Spain, and Europe became significant to me, as I learned how past events in these places impact us all today, even though we may not realise it.

My love for nature began when I was a child, while camping in the mountains of Utah with my family. That love grew during my years in the Scouting program, and as I visited and walked the paths of natural parks all around the world, places like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Glacier, Redwood Forests, Phosphorescent Bays, the Sahara Desert, Mount Etna, and many more.

My career journey began in college, as I studied the importance of effective communication in business and personal life. It expanded in various sales, sales training, and sales leadership positions; as I studied Management and Leadership at a graduate level; and extended its fascination in my mind as I led learning and development teams in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. That journey continues today in the form of a consulting career.

All these personal paths converged into one in 2009, when I embarked on my first pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. It has been said that every pilgrim on the Way of St. James journeys with a very personal purpose, that each pilgrim walks away with a personal learning, and that the experience stays with the pilgrims for life, changing them deeply, helping them gain new focus, purpose, and direction in life. In a sense, their pilgrimage experience sets them off on a new trajectory, starting them on a life-long quest or journey of personal greatness—helping them become and achieve more.

I often use the story of *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (Carroll, 2016:55) to demonstrate the difference between what most of us experience as we *wonder* down life's paths and what pilgrims experience. Wondering is not what a pilgrim does. A pilgrim travels with focus, purpose, commitment, and meaning. Wondering is what Alice was doing in Wonderland, characterised in one famous scene from the book: Alice asks the Cheshire Cat,

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where—' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

'—so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

Regrettably, Alice's *wandering* describes the type of journey that all too many of us seem to find ourselves on today. It certainly describes the wandering of too many of our leaders, who seem more likely to waver back and forth between goals and projects, declaring success while never really having a significant lasting impact on anything they touch or do. It also describes those who may change and waver depending on the mood of the broader community. They wet and stick out their proverbial fingers to test the winds, rather than thinking deeply about who they are as a leader, what their strengths and talents may be, what their life focus, goals, and plans should be. True reflection and focus are rare today, especially among leaders. Even so, it may be understandable. After all, our modern lives are often jam-packed full of activities: full of work, diversions, entertainment, tasks, projects, places to go, and lots of things to accomplish. If we look closely though, we realise that most of these tasks, while filling up our lives and making us feel busy—sometimes even important—far too often are only distractions diverting us from real purpose, that of achieving and maximising our full potential as leaders.

Like millions of others who have experienced a reawakening and renewed focus in life while walking the Way of St. James, I walked away from the experience having come to several realisations that seemingly combined my various life journeys into one. I believe that the transformative power of the Camino experience comes from the effort of walking over a sustained period of time, in solitude with one's own thoughts, and experiencing the restorative power of being closer to and more in tune with nature. All other worries, concerns of life, seem to fade into the background while on pilgrimage. During my pilgrimages, I have realised that pilgrims' enlightenment comes from time available for reflection in solitude, within nature, as they physically and mentally struggle to achieve their goal. While I cannot confirm the source, a saying often attributed to Henry David Thoreau has real merit when considering the growth pilgrims experience while walking in nature:

I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees!

After my own pilgrimage, I also realised that leaders would benefit from such a journey, one where they could exert both body and mind towards a goal and dedicate time to reflecting on who they are as leaders. I realised on my pilgrimage that leadership too is a journey, not a destination in and of itself, and that many of the

principles I had learned and was teaching others were analogous to the pilgrimage route. Because of this, the pilgrimage could be used as a powerful metaphor to teach leaders that leadership, like a pilgrimage, is a journey with both promise and purpose. I also realised that too few leaders—like Alice and most of us, who wander through life without a clear purpose or destination—ever embark on the type of journey that fosters real greatness, like pilgrims experience on the Way of St. James. I realised that this type of leadership experience is best described as a Leadership Pilgrimage, one that requires vision, focus, and perseverance to complete; one that helps leaders discover their core values; one where they have a chance to focus on their end-goal with drive and determination; and one where they constantly seek enlightenment through the solitude and sacrifice of their journey. I realised that the Camino de Santiago is just such a journey, and it is a powerful representation of leadership development. Leadership, then, must become a journey of self-reflection leading to insights and leadership enlightenment, not just the day-to-day of completing tasks.

There are five parallels between the lessons I learned on the Camino de Santiago and what I have been teaching leaders in organisations for over 22 years, including:

1. Know Thyself

Since classical times, when pilgrims read the words 'Know Thyself' on the walls of the temple of Delphi, they have realised that enlightenment comes through the sacrifice of the journey and the clearness of thought that comes through sustained oneness with nature. There is value for a Leadership Pilgrim in discovering and understanding who they are as a leader—what their values, strengths, and weaknesses are, and how to leverage those characteristics to create a leadership legacy others will want to follow.

2. Focus

Pilgrims travel with an intense focus to a physical location on a map and an internal place in their hearts, minds, and souls. Leadership Pilgrims must also develop the same laser-like focus and intense vision that drives them to achieve their goals. Those goals must be big, audacious, significant, and inspiring to others, just as the goal of completing a pilgrimage must have been for others a thousand years ago. Imagine the boldness of such a goal: leaving the comforts of home, family, and livelihood to travel hundreds of miles to a distant land, with strange

customs and languages, all while risking life and limb in the process, in order to come back wiser, more confident, and enlightened. Leadership Pilgrims must be that brave and that focused to achieve a meaningful Leadership Legacy.

3. *Persevere*

Just as sacrifice and suffering are integral parts of the pilgrim's experience, so too must Leadership Pilgrims persevere and overcome barriers to obtain success. Heat, thirst, hunger, cold, blisters, sore muscles, marauding bandits, injury, illness, and potential death, among others were all obstacles and barriers medieval pilgrims faced, yet they persevered through all of these, for they knew that enlightenment came through the struggle. A pilgrimage was not meant to be a walk in the park. So, too, Leadership Pilgrims must recognise the potential barriers to achieving their Leadership Legacy, and they must plan and work to overcome them, for leadership is not a walk in the park either. Great leaders are forged through sacrifice, effort, endurance, and grit.

4. *Inspire*

The scallop shell has become the symbol of direction, motivation, and inspiration for millions of pilgrims for hundreds of years on the Camino de Santiago. That simple symbol inspires and motivates pilgrims to their end destination, the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, and on to Finisterre, what the Romans knew as the 'end of the world,' the most western edge of the European continent. Truly, medieval pilgrims on the Way of St. James, literally and figuratively, were traveling to the end of the world. The scallop shell symbol not only marked the way but served as a token of their journey, their sacrifice, and the enlightenment they achieved. The many grooves on the shell converging at a single point serve as a reminder that each pilgrim's journey is unique, but all share in the final goal. Leadership Pilgrims must also find a way to motivate, influence, lead, and inspire others to join them in their quest for greatness.

5. *Magnify*

Medieval pilgrims believed that the Milky Way was the dust kicked up by each pilgrim's step along the way. For each mile of the hundreds of miles of the Camino, multiplied over a thousand years, and millions upon millions of steps, according to this beautiful legend, trillions of particles of dust have been kicked up into the heavens, creating a pathway for pilgrims to follow for millennia into the future. While most of the millions of pilgrims who have walked the Camino de Santiago

throughout the centuries are lost and forgotten, their steps remain as a signal for future pilgrims to follow. Their actions have been 'magnified' trillions of times over, leaving a legacy for others to follow. Leadership Pilgrims must also strive to 'magnify' their efforts and those they influence, in order to create a lasting legacy that others will be inspired to become a part of, to follow, to participate in.

Development:

Evolution of the Leadership Pilgrimage

The Leadership Pilgrimage became a topic for one of the many workshops that Magnify Leadership & Development offered shortly after my initial Camino Pilgrimage in 2009. Since then, I have offered the workshop, or parts of the workshop, at conferences in Europe, Asia, and North America, as well as offered it as an on-site workshop for organisations. In the years since its inception, it has evolved and improved, thanks to participants' feedback, the two additional pilgrimages I have made on the Way of St. James, and my exposure to other historical pilgrimages and journeys that I feel teach key historical lessons that align with the five principles of the Leadership Pilgrimage. These other famous treks or pilgrimages include:

- The ancient pilgrimage to Delphi
- The journey of the Mayflower Pilgrims
- The bitter route travelled by millions of Africans taken into slavery, starting at Elmina Castle in modern-day Ghana to the shores of North America
- The history of my Mormon pioneer ancestors' 'pilgrimage' to establish a safe space in the deserts of the American West
- The Trail of Tears following the forced migration route that thousands of Native Americans trod on their way to reservations in the west
- Lincoln's train ride to Washington, DC, following his election victory; the pending break-up of the US; four years of civil war; and the return train ride that carried 'the last victim of the Civil War' to his final resting spot in Illinois, following his success in restoring the union that tested whether the United States or any nation 'dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal' could 'long endure.' (Church, 2002:49)
- And my future pilgrimages

The Pandemic Changes Plans

Participant feedback through the years has been positive, and I have been happy taking the workshop to business locations and meeting sites; yet, one major component was lacking, that of connecting with nature: the solitude, the sacrifice of hiking on the trail, the experience of the pilgrim on the Way of St. James.

So, 2020 was supposed to be the year that I took a small group of leaders on the Way of St. James, to experience the workshop on the actual Camino. Hotels were being booked, the itinerary was set, and workshop participants were signing up. It was all coming together. But 2020, of course, also turned out to be the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied by extensive travel closures. The Leadership Pilgrimage Adventure will have to wait another year, or two, or more.

Perseverance is One of the Five Leadership Pilgrimage Lessons

As such, 2020 became the time to practice what we preach. After all, perseverance is one of the Five Leadership Pilgrimage Lessons.

Magnify Leadership and Development faces huge obstacles due to COVID-19. Nearly all our business is derived from on-site, face-to-face workshops. However, we have not run a face-to-face workshop since the first week of March 2020. We have switched over to running workshops mostly on Zoom, and we have discovered a real need to provide top-quality leadership development via Zoom. Thus, the Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage was born.

While we still believe that the Leadership Pilgrimage Adventure will be of real value to leaders, it is also true that the number of leaders who will be able to travel to Spain or other Leadership Pilgrimage Adventure locations, now or in the future, is limited, drastically, by COVID-19. The Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage expands our reach to countless more leaders. Hence, our ability to impact and improve leadership will greatly improve with this option.

I created the Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage to expand the reach of the Leadership Pilgrimage. This is the ideal tool and setting for individuals, groups, intact teams, or entire organisations to virtually undertake the Leadership Pilgrimage. It traces the pilgrimage routes online as they

learn about the five parallels between lessons learned by me on my pilgrimage travels, my education in communication skills, management, leadership, and my over two decades in corporate leadership development.

Discussion:

Where are We, and What are the Results So Far?

The Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage has been created, with the first Virtual Leadership Pilgrims enrolling in September 2020. We will offer the experience at a 25% discount for the first six months. Also, thanks to a COVID-19 stimulus package provided by the State of Utah (<https://business.utah.gov/shop-in-utah-offers/>), we will also be able to offer an additional 25% discount to Utah residents, making the experience very affordable for anyone looking for a unique leadership development experience. We also consider this as an opportunity to gather input and make tweaks for the first six months of the program, while offering the training to those who may not be able to attend live workshops during the pandemic.

Our goal is to make this a unique leadership development experience, one that has a real impact on participants and leads to real differences in the way they lead. As many pilgrims find the Way of St. James a life-changing experience, our goal is to make this a top-notch, leadership-changing experience for those who dedicate themselves to learning for eight to 16 weeks. The structure and contents of the experience are outlined in Table 1.

Exercise, Nature and Reflection

All of the tools in Table 1 will be used to teach the five Leadership Pilgrimage Principles while Virtual Leadership Pilgrims virtually recreate the experience of walking the Way of St. James. On an actual Leadership Pilgrimage Adventure, they would walk each day along the trail while reflecting on the lessons learned during each day's workshop assignments. While participants will not actually walk to the pilgrimage sites as we had hoped to do on the Adventure Leadership Pilgrimage, we will do our best to recreate that journey virtually. As Virtual Leadership Pilgrims explore each of the five Leadership Pilgrimage Principles, they will also be asked to walk, run, or bike, or exercise in a way that suits their abilities and interest, to recreate the effort / sacrifice and focus that an actual pilgrim makes as they walk the solitary paths of the Way of St. James in northern Spain. Through the magic of technology, we will track participants' progress

Table 1: Elements of The Virtual Leadership

<p>- Eight to 16 weeks (depending on the time commitment of the individual Leadership Pilgrim or group of learners) of learning about the five leadership parallels experienced by pilgrims on actual long-distance journeys, like the Way of St. James. These lessons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know Thyself – Who you are, how others perceive you, your core values, etc. - Focus – What is your desired / optimal leadership destination? What do you hope to accomplish as a leader? How can you achieve your goals while staying true to core values? What does it take to create and achieve a meaningful Leadership Legacy? - Perseverance – How do we foresee and overcome obstacles or barriers on our way to creating and achieving goals and an aspirational Leadership Legacy? How do we acquire the ‘grit’ necessary to achieve greatness? - Inspire – How can we motivate and inspire others to join us in our goals? We create a symbol that motivates and inspires. How do we create a speech / platform to communicate and inspire others? - Magnify – How do we magnify our strengths and the strength of those we influence? How do we successfully continue our Leadership Pilgrimage in the future?
<p>- Weekly or bi-weekly (depending on whether the learner is engaged in an eight- or 16-week virtual pilgrimage) Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage activities and reading assignments in eBook format.</p>
<p>- Weekly or bi-weekly (again, depending on the participant’s choice to follow an eight- or 16-week course) one-hour Zoom meetings, where Virtual Pilgrims will meet with the author and lead facilitator, James Gehrke, to discuss the prior week’s assignment, preview concepts related to the five Leadership Pilgrimage Principles, review progress made on their ‘virtual pilgrimage,’ and receive assignments for the following week.</p>
<p>- A Learning Journal.</p>
<p>- A Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage Passport (used to track learning progress).</p>
<p>- DiSC Workplace Assessment and Report (Personality Assessment).</p>
<p>- DiSC 363 – A 360° assessment evaluating eight key dimensions of leadership.</p>
<p>- Weekly exercises / activities to stimulate self-discovery about the five Leadership Pilgrimage Principles. These activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discover Your Strengths & Talents - Values Cards – to identify core values that drive and motivate you to action - Life Journey Exercise – to explore key moments in your past that contributed to your strengths, talents, and values and to plot your future towards your Aspirational Leadership Legacy - Future Perfect Exercise – to discover and define your Aspirational Leadership Legacy - Goal Setting - Leadership Pilgrimage Symbol Exercise – Create a symbol, coat of arms and T-shirt to help you focus on your values and Aspirational Leadership Legacy - A strategy board game – Review and practice Leadership Pilgrimage key concepts like values, focus, perseverance, planning, and flexibility, among others, in game format (use it online with other Virtual Leadership ‘Pilgrims’ or on ‘game night’ with your family and / or friends) - Your Teachable Moment – Create and practice a speech that will teach, motivate, and inspire others to join you on your Leadership Pilgrimage
<p>Books</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>8 Dimensions of Leadership</i>, by Jeffrey Sugeran, Mark Scullard, Emma Wilhelm; <i>The One Thing</i>, by Gary Keller & Jay Papasan; <i>Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance</i>, By Angela Duckworth.
<p>- The Conqueror Way of St. James Virtual Mission (used to track physical progress on your way along the pilgrimage route in Spain (virtually). See https://www.theconqueror.events/camino/.</p>
<p>- Customised Fit Bit Inspire with Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage logo/reminder to track your distance on the Virtual Mission (above).</p>
<p>- Two-month complimentary membership with the Wellness Buff, with food coaches to help maximise your fitness and relationship with food while you participate in the physical exercises related to the Conqueror Virtual Mission (above). See https://thewellnessbuff.com/.</p>
<p>- A Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage sports shirt, to wear while walking, riding, or exercising on your Virtual Mission.</p>
<p>- A Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage Credential – used to remember your Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage, your core values, your aspirational Leadership Legacy, your symbol.</p>

using an exercise tracking tool, like Fit Bit, a map on our website (www.theleadershippilgrimage.com), and The Conqueror Way of St. James Virtual Mission <https://www.theconqueror.events/camino/>, a software tool that tracks the progress of all current Virtual Leadership Pilgrims as they travel and learn about the five principles of the Leadership Pilgrimage.

The Pilgrim's Passport

To mark their passage along the Way of St. James, pilgrims collect a series of stamps from the different places where they stay overnight. By the end of their journey, most pilgrims have collected dozens of stamps on a passport, demonstrating their progress along the route. Virtual Leadership Pilgrims will likewise collect stamps in a Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage Passport, which serves as a reminder of the numerous activities they completed on their journey to their Leadership Legacy.

The Compostela

The pilgrim's passport is used as proof that the pilgrim has met the requirements of the pilgrimage to achieve the Compostela, a certificate that states the name and purpose of the pilgrim and their chosen pilgrimage path. This serves as a lasting reminder to the pilgrim, along with the shell (the symbol of the pilgrimage), of the lessons learned and the self-discovery achieved during the pilgrimage. Likewise, Virtual Leadership Pilgrims will convert their symbolic Leadership Pilgrimage Passport into a Leadership Pilgrimage Certificate, which will serve as a reminder and inspiration of what they have achieved and learned on their pilgrimage, including the miles travelled, their core leadership values, their Aspirational Leadership Legacy, their daily / monthly / yearly goals to achieve their legacy, and their chosen Leadership symbol.

Join the Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage

For me, it is very exciting to see the progress we have made in expanding the Leadership Pilgrimage experience to countless leaders around the world who otherwise might never have had the opportunity to participate in the transformative power of this workshop. I look forward to making improvements over the coming weeks and months as we learn from our initial group of Leadership Pilgrims, to make the learning experience more impactful.

In the meantime, I invite you to come join me, as I play the role of your virtual tour guide for an internal, personal, virtual 'pilgrimage.' We will have to consider this a 'virtual' pilgrimage because, until the time comes

when you can join me in person on my Leadership Pilgrimage Adventures on the Way of St. James, you will likely participate from home.

My goal, then, is to make leaders stretch, just like pilgrims must stretch themselves in both body and spirit as they travel on the difficult road to attain their own personal enlightenment. The learning journey, both through the course materials and reflection accompanied with exercise, is designed to mimic the pilgrimage experience. My hope is that leaders, if they take the assignments seriously—getting up and walking, running, or riding in nature, while they think, meditate, and make serious reflection—will find the type of enlightenment that pilgrims experience on the Way of St. James, the type that will help them be more, achieve more, accomplish more, be more grounded and secure in their beliefs, and reach a new level of personal and professional excellence.

¡Buen Camino!

So, are you ready to begin? If so, pick up your virtual staff, strap on your virtual backpack, and begin your Leadership Legacy 'Pilgrimage.' When fellow pilgrims meet or separate along the Way of St. James, they use the term *Buen Camino* or Good Journey. I hope that you feel inspired to 'magnify' your potential by embarking on your own Virtual Leadership Pilgrimage. Let me be your guide as you travel virtually on your journey of self-discovery. Please click on the link below if you have any questions, would like to join our newsletter, or to sign up. <https://www.leadershippilgrimage.com/contact>

Buen Camino and Good Leadership Journey!

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