Module 7: Legacy Building – Purpose, Vision, and Giving Back

👥 Owner	Ⓐ Ashley Zeck
☰ Tags	

> 💡 **Why This Matters**
>
> Long-term change sticks when people believe their story, work, and struggles will outlast them.
> Legacy thinking—supported by recovery science and entrepreneurship research—creates existential meaning, strengthens resilience, and motivates pay-it-forward action.
>
> Theoretical Foundation: Legacy Building.

Module Objective

Anchor participants' journey in the idea that their business, leadership, and recovery are building blocks for a legacy—impact that ripples forward for others, not just themselves.

This module breaks the "us vs. them" narrative by showing that legacy building is universal—not reserved for the "fixed" or "successful," but belonging to anyone willing to create ripple effects of change. Community, not isolation, is what makes lasting legacies possible.

Learning Outcomes

- Define "legacy" in personal, community, and entrepreneurial terms

- Develop a long-term vision and "purpose statement"

- Identify specific ways to give back: mentorship, social impact, community projects

- Connect their business, story, or recovery to a bigger mission

- **Understand how community connection—not individual perfection—drives lasting change and breaks stigma**

- **Recognize that legacy building is universal and belongs to everyone, dismantling "us vs them" hierarchies**

Time: ~150 minutes (adjustable for group size/context)

Module Structure & Activities

This is the capstone. Legacy work asks: "What will outlast you?" It's about meaning, ripple effects, and the long game.

Section 1: "What's Legacy?" Visioning Icebreaker *(15 min)*

- **Prompt:** "What does legacy mean to you? Who do you know (famous or not) who left one?"

- **Share-out:** Participants call out words, phrases, or names. Write them on a shared board.

- **Group patterns:** What themes emerge? (Impact, memory, values, family, community, change?)

- **Facilitator shares:** Brief personal story or example of someone whose legacy inspired you.

- **Facilitator Tip:** Broaden the definition—legacy isn't just for the famous or wealthy. It's the teacher who changed your life, the neighbor who helped you, the friend who believed in you.

Section 2: Legacy Inventory – What You're Already Building *(20 min)*

- **Solo reflection:** Answer these prompts:
  - Who have you helped in the last year? (Even small ways—a conversation, a referral, showing up)
  - What have you created or contributed? (A business, art, a relationship, a skill, a changed habit)
  - What would someone say about you at your best?
  - If you disappeared tomorrow, what would people remember?
- **Pair share (optional):** Discuss one thing that surprised you.
- **Facilitator Tip:** Help them see they're already building a legacy—it's not some distant future thing.

Section 2.5: Community Over Labels – Breaking "Us vs Them" *(15 min)*

> 🌊 **Research Foundation:** Raj Chetty's landmark 2022 study in *Nature* shows that social capital—access to opportunity-rich networks—is one of the strongest predictors of economic mobility across *all* populations. Community connections drive success for everyone, not just people overcoming specific challenges.[1]

- **Mini-lesson (8 min):** The science of why community matters—for everyone
  - **Universal truth:** No one builds alone. Peer networks, mentorship, and community support drive success in entrepreneurship, education, and life transitions
  - **Breaking the hierarchy:** Research shows peer-led models work *better* than expert-only models because they:
    - Build trust and cultural relevance organically
    - Break down "service provider" vs "service recipient" barriers
    - Create sustainable, self-multiplying networks

- Give everyone something to offer AND something to learn
    - **The "helper-therapy principle":** Helping others strengthens your own growth and recovery
    - **Key message:** "Your struggles don't make you less valuable. Your experience makes you *more* valuable to someone coming up behind you."
- **Group reflection (7 min):** "When have you felt labeled, categorized, or put in a box? What would it mean to be seen as a builder instead?"
    - Share in pairs or small groups
    - Volunteers share key insights with full group
- **Facilitator script:** *"Legacy Rising rejects the us vs. them narrative completely. There are no 'fixed people' helping 'broken people.' There are only builders at different stages of the journey. Some are further ahead. Some just started. All have something to teach and learn. Your past doesn't disqualify you—it equips you."*
- **Facilitator Tip:** Name specific labels and stigma your participants have faced. Don't be abstract. Make it real.

Section 3: Personal Purpose Statement Workshop *(35 min)*

- **Mini-lesson (10 min):** The power of "why"—stories from alumni or icons who turned pain/passion into purpose.
    - Example: "I want my business to prove that people like me can build wealth and hire others."
    - Example: "I want my recovery to show my kids that change is possible."
    - Example: "I want my story to give hope to someone in the same dark place I was."
- **Solo writing (15 min):** Craft a purpose statement using this frame (or create your own):
    - "I want my life/business/recovery to stand for _."
    - "The legacy I'm building is _."

- "I'm here to _."

- **Voluntary sharing (5 min):** Invite participants to read their statements aloud for feedback and group energy.

- 🔧 **NEW: Purpose + Role Micro-Activity (5 min):** Immediately after writing the purpose statement, participants answer:

  - **"Who does this make you responsible to?"**

  - **Because of this purpose, I commit to showing up as a:**

    - ☐ Mentor ☐ Connector ☐ Builder ☐ Witness ☐ Organizer

  - **One way this role shows up *inside this community*:**

  - **One way it shows up *outside this community*:**

  - **Facilitator frame:** "Purpose without function is just poetry. This question turns your purpose into action. Who are you responsible to? How will you show up?"

- **Facilitator Tip:** Purpose statements evolve. This is version 1.0, not forever. Give permission for it to be messy. But responsibility is immediate—it starts now, not later.

Section 4: Legacy Mapping – Ripple Effects & Community Networks *(30 min)*

> 🔗 **Evidence:** Granovetter's classic "strength of weak ties" research (1973) shows that bridges to new networks create opportunity. Peer and near-peer mentorship activates social capital and drives resilience across entrepreneurship, education, and community development.[1]

- **Activity:** Map out who benefits from their work—family, clients, peers, future cohorts, community.

- **Visual exercise:** Draw "ripples" diagram on paper or whiteboard:

  - Center circle: Me

- Next ring: Immediate circle (family, close friends, clients)

  - Next ring: Wider impact (community, alumni network, industry, strangers who see my story)

  - Outer ring: Future generations (kids, grandkids, people not born yet)

- **Add connection lines:** Draw lines between participants on the board to show how everyone's ripples intersect

  - "Your legacy connects to theirs. You're building this together, not alone."

  - "No one here is an island. Your story strengthens someone else's courage. Their success opens doors for you."

- **Reflection questions:**

  - "How does seeing this change the way you think about your choices today?"

  - "What would be different if you built your legacy in community instead of in isolation?"

  - "Who in this room is part of YOUR legacy network?"

- 🔧 **NEW: Legacy Claim Ceremony (10 min):** The ripple exercise is powerful—now make it relational.

  - **Facilitator frame:** "Legacy isn't abstract. It's built person to person, right here in this room."

  - **Activity:** Each participant must:

    - Point to one person or group in the room

    - Say: **"Part of what I'm building is for you."**

    - No explanation. No stories. Just the claim.

  - **What this does:**

    - Anchors legacy relationally

    - Breaks isolation

    - Creates mutual responsibility without hierarchy

- **Facilitator Tip:** Hold space for silence. Let the weight of this land. This is a ceremony, not a discussion.
- **Facilitator Tip:** Show examples from alumni who mentored, hired cycle-breakers, or created opportunities for others. Make it concrete. Emphasize: interdependence is strength, not weakness.

Section 5: Tribe Commitment – Named Roles & Obligations *(25 min)*

> 💪 **Why This Works:** Peer facilitation accelerates individual, community, and societal change. When communities organize peer-to-peer support, they create sustainable change that breaks down barriers between "helpers" and "helped."[1]

- **Reframe (3 min):** "This isn't about charity. This isn't about 'giving back' because you owe something. This is about belonging—and belonging has a price. Not a financial price, but a commitment price. You are now part of the infrastructure. The tribe needs you. This is **not** symbolic. This is **operational**."
- 🔧 **REQUIRED: Tribe Commitment Card (15 min):**
  - **Each participant selects ONE role for the next 6 months:**
    - ☐ **Near-Peer Mentor** (new cohort)
    - ☐ **Alumni Builder Pod Lead** (facilitate monthly circles)
    - ☐ **Resource Connector** (bridge people to opportunities, jobs, capital)
    - ☐ **Story Contributor** (speak, write, be visible to break stigma)
    - ☐ **Community Event Support** (logistics, hosting, setup for gatherings)
  - **They write on their commitment card:**
    - **Role:**
    - **Timeline:** (start date, 6-month commitment)
    - **One person I'll partner with:**

- **Facilitator collects cards** and follows up within 2 weeks to activate roles.

  - **Facilitator frame:** "This is the price of belonging. Not money. Not perfection. But showing up for the tribe. We don't ask you to be fixed. We ask you to be present."

- **Group accountability pairs (7 min):** Partner with someone in the room who will check in with you monthly on your tribe role.

  - Exchange contact info. Set first check-in date.

- **Facilitator Tip:** This is non-negotiable but flexible. If someone's circumstances change, they can adjust their role—but they must stay connected to the tribe. Emphasize: the tribe doesn't need your heroics. It needs your presence.

Section 6: Legacy Transfer – "From Me to We" *(15 min)*

> 🧱 **This is the handoff.** Alumni knowledge becomes cumulative, not lost. The tribe gets stronger with every cohort.

- **Facilitator frame (2 min):** "Legacy isn't what you leave behind when you're gone. It's what you pass on while you're still here. The next cohort needs to know what you learned the hard way. This is how the tribe gets wiser—together."

- **Solo writing (10 min):** Participants answer (short, honest):

  - **One mistake I don't want the next cohort to repeat:**

  - **One truth I learned the hard way:**

  - **One thing I want the tribe to protect going forward:**

- **Collection (3 min):** Facilitator collects these into a **Legacy Playbook** (living document shared with future cohorts).

  - Optional: Volunteers can read theirs aloud.

- **Facilitator Tip:** This is sacred. Handle these with care. They are not "feedback"—they are inheritance. The Legacy Playbook becomes part of onboarding for every new cohort. Alumni wisdom shapes the program.

Section 7: Storytelling for Legacy *(10 min)*

- **Prompt:** "What part of your story would you share to help someone else rise?"
- **Mini-exercise:** Draft or record a 1-min "legacy message" for a future participant, a family member, or the community.
- **Voluntary group sharing** (if time allows).
- **Facilitator Tip:** This can be written, recorded audio, or video. Some will share now, some will save it. Both are fine.

Section 8: Passing the Torch – Graduation Reframed *(15 min)*

> 🔥 **This is not a celebration. This is a transfer of power.** Graduates are not "done"—they are now part of the infrastructure.

- **Reframe graduation (2 min):** "You are not graduating *from* Legacy Rising. You are graduating *into* the tribe. You are now part of the operating system. The program doesn't end—your role changes."
- **Group co-design (8 min):** What do you want your Passing the Torch ceremony to look and feel like?
  - Who will you invite? What will you say? What rituals matter?
  - How will you honor the journey? (Certificates, stories, gifts, alumni passing of the torch?)
- **Group co-design:** What do you want your graduation to look and feel like?
  - Who will you invite? What will you say? What rituals matter?
  - What does "passing the torch" mean to you?
- 🔧 **Torch Ceremony Elements (Built into final graduation):**
  - **Graduates symbolically receive:**
    - A **builder marker** (bracelet, card, pin, patch, etc.)
    - With these words: **"You are now part of the infrastructure."**

- **Alumni speak to new cohort (if present):** Brief words about what the journey taught them and what they're building now.

  - **Facilitator closes with:** "The torch is in your hands. Keep it lit. Pass it forward."

- **Volunteers (5 min):** Who wants to help organize the ceremony?

- **Facilitator Tip:** Language matters. This is identity-cementing. Do not call it a "completion." Call it a **transition**. They are not leaving—they are ascending into leadership.

Section 9: Final Reflection & Commitment *(5 min)*

- **Prompt:** "What's one legacy move you'll make this month?"

- **Write it down** on a commitment card or group board.

- **Closing affirmation (read aloud together or by facilitator):**

"Your story matters. Your work matters. The cycles you're breaking will ripple forward for generations.

You are not broken. You are not a problem to be solved. You are a builder.

The labels they gave you were never yours to carry. The shame was never yours to hold.

There is no 'us vs them' in this room—only people at different points on the same journey, all with something to teach and something to learn.

Your struggles made you stronger. Your experience makes you valuable. Your legacy starts now.

Build well. Build together. Build without shame."

Facilitator Tips (General)

- Frame "legacy" as something anyone can build—no need to be famous or wealthy.

- Share alumni stories: How small acts or honest mentorship changed someone else's life.

- Reinforce: Giving back helps *you* stay strong as much as it helps others.
- **Actively dismantle "us vs them" language throughout the module:**
  - Replace "service provider/recipient" with "peer," "builder," "community member"
  - Replace "helping those less fortunate" with "building together" or "mutual support"
  - Replace "giving back to society" with "investing in community" or "strengthening the network"
  - Challenge any language that implies hierarchy, rescue, or charity
- **Name stigma directly.** Don't dance around it. Ask: "What labels have been put on you? What assumptions have people made?" Then dismantle those labels with evidence and dignity.
- **Center community, not individual heroism.** Legacies are built in community, not in isolation. Emphasize interdependence as strength.
- **Use research to validate their experience.** When you cite Chetty, Granovetter, or peer leadership studies, you're telling participants: "Science proves what you already know—community matters, and your experience has value."
- **Create brave space, not safe space.** Legacy work requires vulnerability. Let participants name hard truths about stigma, labels, and systemic barriers. Don't minimize or rush past discomfort.

Add-Ons / Extras

1. Legacy Panel

- Invite alumni or community leaders to share what "legacy" means to them and how they built it—warts and all.

2. Ripple Effect Visualization

- Use a group whiteboard or digital map to trace each participant's impact—visually connect everyone's legacy.

3. Alumni Project Incubator

- Launch or join alumni-led social ventures, mentorship programs, or advocacy projects.
- **Facilitator:** Track and celebrate these in alumni updates/newsletters.

4. Legacy Time Capsule

- Record videos, letters, or art for future cohorts—what would you want next year's cycle-breakers to know?

5. Stigma-Breaking Storytelling Campaign

- Create a community storytelling project (video series, podcast, written anthology, art exhibit) that challenges stereotypes and labels
- Focus: "This is what a builder looks like" or "Labels we've been given vs. legacies we're building"
- Share publicly (with participant consent) to shift narratives in the wider community
- **Purpose:** Visible representation breaks stigma. When people see themselves reflected with dignity, it changes what's possible.

6. Community Asset Mapping

- Map the collective skills, resources, and networks in the room—what can this community offer each other and the world?
- Create a living directory or resource exchange
- **Purpose:** Show that this community has abundance, not deficits. Shift from "what's wrong with us" to "what we can build together."

Assessment / Reflection Prompts

- "How do you want to be remembered in this community?"
- "What's one thing you want to leave behind for others?"

- "How does thinking about legacy change your choices right now?"

Citations (For Grants/Slides/Docs)

Community & Social Capital (Breaking "Us vs Them")

- **Chetty, R., Jackson, M., Kuchler, T., Stroebel, J., et al. (2022).** "Social Capital I: Measurement and Associations with Economic Mobility." *Nature*, 608, 108-121.
  - *Landmark study showing social networks are one of the strongest predictors of economic mobility—universal truth, not just for marginalized populations*
- **Granovetter, M. S. (1973).** "The strength of weak ties." *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
  - *Bridges to new networks create opportunity*
- **Putnam, R. D. (2000).** *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
- **Brookings Institution (2021).** "How We Rise: How social networks impact economic mobility in Racine, WI, San Francisco, CA, and Washington, DC."

Peer Leadership & Mentorship (Dismantling Hierarchy)

- **Baluku, M. M., Matagi, L., & Otto, K. (2020).** "Exploring the Link Between Mentoring and Intangible Outcomes of Entrepreneurship: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy and Moderating Effects of Gender." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1556.
  - *Peer mentorship drives entrepreneurial success and self-efficacy*
- **Boat, A. A., Miranda, A., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2022).** "Enhancing Education and Career Pathways Through Peer and Near-Peer Social Capital." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 51, 1287-1304.
  - *Near-peer mentorship activates opportunity pathways*
- **Stanford Social Innovation Review (2020).** "When Peers Work Together to Drive Social Change."

- *Peer-led models accelerate change and break "helper/helped" barriers*
- **PMC/NIH (2023).** "Peer Facilitation: Accelerating Individual, Community, and Societal Change."
- **Beals, R., et al. (2021).** "Activating Social Capital: How Peer and Socio-Emotional Mentoring Facilitate Resilience and Success for Community College Students." *Frontiers in Education*, 6.

Shame, Stigma & Dignity (Breaking Labels)

- **Brown, B. (2012).** *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Gotham Books.
  - *"Shame is the most corrosive emotion—it disconnects us from change."*
- **Maté, G. (2008).** *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*. Knopf Canada.
  - *Shame and labels increase relapse; dignity drives recovery*
- **Hari, J. (2015).** *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs*. Bloomsbury.
  - *"The opposite of addiction is not sobriety—it's connection."*
- **Porges, S. W. (2011).** *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-regulation*. W. W. Norton.
  - *Safety—not surveillance—unlocks engagement and learning*

Legacy & Purpose

- **Frankl, V. E. (1984).** *Man's Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press.
  - *Existential meaning strengthens resilience*
- **Brown, B. (2015).** *Rising Strong: How the Ability to Reset Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Random House.
- **Sherraden, M. (2013).** "Assets and the Pursuit of Well-Being." In *Asset Building and Community Development* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Recovery Community Examples (Optional)

- The Phoenix (thephoenix.org)

- Recovery Café (recoverycafe.org)

- Alcoholics Anonymous (aa.org)

📝 📝 Legacy Inventory Worksheet

🌊 🌊 Community Over Labels – Discussion Guide

✍️ ✍️ Purpose Statement Workshop Worksheet

🔗 🔗 Legacy Mapping Visual Exercise

💪 💪 Giving Back Challenge Worksheet

🎙️ 🎙️ Storytelling for Legacy Assignment

📚 📚 Research & Readings – Community & Anti-Stigma