

**TIP #47 – DECEMBER 2010
FIVE WORD LEGACY
CONTRIBUTED BY VALERIE WILLIS**

Objective: Engage participants in thinking about how they want to be perceived by others. This exercise can be used as an introductory ice-breaker or incorporated into a program module focused on Model the Way.

Group Size: Any

Time Required: 15 minutes

Materials Needed: Post-it Notes, Index Cards or Paper

Process:

1. Distribute an index card or piece of paper to each participant.
2. Introduce the power of legacy, using the following quote from *The Leader's Legacy*: "The life you live is the legacy you leave."
 - Ask participants what this means to them
 - Ask participants, "How many of you are leaving a legacy? Raise your hands." You will always have some who don't raise their hands
 - Discuss how the question is not **IF** we're leaving a legacy but what **KIND** of legacy are we leaving. Everyone's hands should really be raised.
3. Allow participants to take approximately five minutes to think about their legacy. Have them consider what five words they would want other people to use when remembering them.
4. When time is up, have participants share the five words they have chosen—either in pairs or with the entire group seated at the table, depending on the size of the session.
5. Ask participants to consider whether their current behaviors are reflecting those words. If not, they should.
6. Instruct participants to keep the card handy and refer to it when discussing Model the Way.
7. Ask participants to keep the card in a spot where they can see the words every day for the next 30 days. Do a self check.

Post-It note version:

Conduct the same exercise with one exception: have participants write their five words on Post-its. Using flip chart paper or the wall, have each person sign their note and post it, declaring in front of the entire group how they want to be remembered.

Valarie Willis is a Certified Master Facilitator of The Leadership Challenge® Workshop and principal of Valarie Willis Consulting, in Loveland, OH, where she focuses on strategic management consulting. She can be reached at vwillis@cinci.rr.com.