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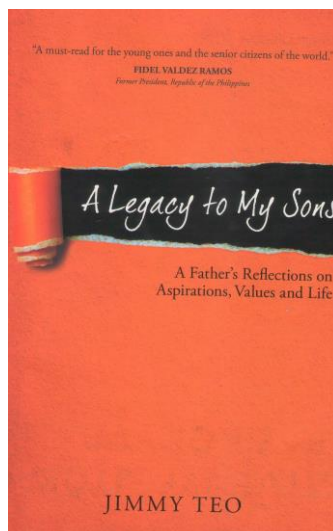
## A Review of

### *Legacy to My Sons*

An Inspiring Challenge by Jimmy Teo to  
Create and Leave Behind Great Legacy

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## **A Book of Sound Counsel and Wisdom**

Jimmy Teo's *Legacy to My Sons* is a book of sound counsel and wisdom, a reading of which would benefit all parents and their children. Not only parents and children, but also teachers stand to benefit a lot from this well-written, easy to read book.

Civilizations throughout human history have always offered counsel and wisdom to parents and children as to how they should look upon each other and how they could benefit from each other. Ancient Chinese and Indian civilizations, in particular, even elevated the parents to the level of deities.

## **Reflections of a Father**



**Jimmy Teo**

Jimmy Teo's book *Legacy to My Sons* has a significant subtitle: *A Father's Reflections on Aspirations, Values and Life*. Parents often feel that their life's mission is fulfilled if their children do well both materially and spiritually in this world. But their aspirations for their children are sometimes misled, being based on mostly economic considerations, future career, etc. Some religiously-oriented families may wish their children to join religious orders. A wholesome approach to our children should involve not only their material strength and well-being, but also their spiritual growth with sound moral values. In a competitive world, our children may be prompted to excel in competitions all the time, building up stress and strain, and this could lead to several ill effects.

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## **Configuring Our Aspirations for Our Children**

Jimmy Teo presents a valuable approach to configure our aspirations for our children as parents. Children learn their morals from parents and immediate family, from their teachers, peers, schoolmates and so on. Media also plays a very crucial role these days. This process continues all through their lives. A parent looks at the world, thinks over all the possibilities that his/her children would face in the future, begins to seek and give counsel, as well as impart wisdom to the children. The parents may not openly discuss some of the issues, but their aspirations will certainly be revealed through many diverse sources and resources, to their children.

### **The Prologue**

*Legacy to My Sons* begins with a Prologue, in which Jimmy Teo reports some of his concerns: “This is not an easy world. I have witnessed the demise of several good friends and associates, some younger than me. Some friends are in deep depression. In business, I have witnessed injustice and dirty political games. Our young people will face the same dilemmas. They all need guidance and inspiration to continue on. I hope they have the opportunity to read my writings as they are the culmination of wisdom gained from my experience of both good and bad.” A true depiction of the world around us and a valid caution to our young people.

### **Readable and Relevant**

Jimmy Teo’s book is readable with examples and episodes from life experience and all these are relevant to all of us. He also makes sure that he uses the right word. He has another apt observation in the Prologue: “Words have the beautiful ability to clean, cajole, inspire and even reprimand. Words are everlasting and can be read over and over again. They can be memorized. They have life. Words convey thoughts that can turn coal into diamonds, dreams into reality, sadness to happiness or the other way around.”

### **Structure of *Legacy***

*Legacy to My Sons* is divided into three parts. Each part has four chapters.

**Part I** has the following Chapters:

1. Aspirations
2. Resilience
3. Wisdom
4. Contentment

**Part II** has the following Chapters:

5. Money

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6. Work
7. Relationships
8. Health

**Part III** has the following Chapters:

9. Truths
10. Giving
11. Love
12. Legacy

### **Aspirations**

“Aspirations” (Chapter 1) is further divided into seven sections: Achievers, Do Our Best, “Can, Can” Aspirations, Influence, Ants’ Philosophy and Dream and Be Honestly Human.

### **Defining Aspirations**

Jimmy Teo defines *aspirations* as “eager desire to achieve lofty ideals and dreams, with simplicity and honesty.” Eagerness, desire, ideals, dreams, simplicity and honesty – important elements for a life well planned and appropriately lived. “To aspire is to eagerly seek and work towards the dreamed goals.” Good counsel to all including our own family members – daughters and sons. And he commands us: “So, let us aspire before we expire. Life is temporary. Time does not wait for us.” Young people must necessarily understand that Time does not wait for them, whether they look at life as temporary or not.

### **Resilience**

“Resilience” (Chapter 2) is divided into Persistence, Enjoying Stress, Failures and Tiredness, Bitter or Better?, Hope, Cambodia, The Winner, and Sadness and Tears. Jimmy Teo argues that stress is the anti-dote to laziness. Here is an interesting point of view: “Failure and tiredness are close cousins. They come from the same family.” How do we treat our failures? Jimmy writes, “Failures are good stepping-stones to success. You can know this by checking the histories of many successful people. ... Never be afraid of failures. Use failure as a positive force”. (p. 29).

### **Wisdom**

Chapter 3 Wisdom offers seven sections: Sorry, Gracious Talking, Family Secrets, Forgiveness, Be Not Angry, What is Life?, and Happiness Fibres. An important feature of this chapter, indeed of the entire book, is the subtle humor that could be read between lines. Jimmy writes, “The three words – ‘*I am sorry*’ – seem so difficult to say. Most litigation cases could have been settled with the same three words. For some, they must be the most expensive words

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on earth!” Just in one-and-a half pages, Happiness Fibres presents a beautiful outline for our lives, for all of us. The essence of this section is: “We must be survivors with God’s help, not victims.”

### **How Do We Get Our Contentment?**

Chapter 4 is on Contentment, and it contains the following sections: Envy, Austerity, Happiness, Contentment, Count Our Blessings, Enough. There are many practical suggestions in this chapter also. We are encouraged not to allow the dark side of our character to get the better of us. “Your job is to nurture people better than yourself”. (p. 61).

### **That Powerful Motivator and Spoiler - Money**

Chapter 5 is titled Money. This chapter has the following sections: Money, Gambling, Home Finances, Save Money, Debt and Surety, Zero to Hero, and Success. Here is a pithy saying: “A successful entrepreneur is one who comes up from zero financially to become a hero. A bankrupt is one who becomes zero after being a hero”. (p. 87) We see this happen around us all the time, but have we learned a lesson or two from such events? Here is yet another pearl of wisdom: “Success is a state of mind. A Hawker may consider himself successful as his food is on demand and he is making money ... My simple thought about success is to make money as much as I comfortably can, while knowing how to use it to help those less privileged ...” (p. 90).

### **Work or Beg?**

Chapter 6 is on *WORK*, with the following sections: Enjoying Work, Work Ethics, Charity, Beggars, Boss and Slackness. Every point raised here is directly related to our ways of life in these modern days all over the world.

### **All About Relationships**

Chapter 7 is on *Relationships*. This deals with Friendliness, Friends, Daughters, Father, Mother, Please, Grandpa!, Special Children, and Honour Our Parents. Daughters “are created to make the world beautiful and kind (p. 113). “Be tender and kind to your children and husband and they will reciprocate even more in return” (p. 113).

### **Gout or Goat? Seek a Healthy Life!**

Chapter 8 takes us in the path that leads to gain and help us maintain HEALTH. This chapter contains guidelines relating to Water, Food, Gout or Goat?, Health and Illness, Longer Life and Cold Bath. Many practical and time-tested suggestions are offered in this chapter. Some of the precious declarations and suggestions: “Persistence and the right frame of mind matter a lot to our health ... Illness can strike at any moment. If our body is strong and we are at peace,

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we are in a better state to overcome any illnesses that come our way. ... Our state of mind determines our health in almost every way” (p. 134-135).

### **Satyam Eva Jayate! Truth Alone Triumphs!**

Chapter 9 is on *Truths*. The seven sections that constitute this chapter offer a helpful guide to understand and live a life of truth. The chapter deals with *Respect, Kindness, Humility, Appreciation, Humility or Poverty?, True Friends*, and *Think*. This chapter has many episodes to illustrate the points highlighted. On humility, “The financial controller commented that just by having some money, people could be very arrogant. He asked if I agreed with him. I told him that such people were the ‘not very rich’. That was why they were so arrogant.. They will experience fatal disaster sooner or later. Their pride will be their millstone”. (p. 150)

### **Eternal Truth – Love, Give**

Chapter 10 deals with *Giving* and focuses on Gifts, Caring, Charity, Giving, April and May, and My American Friends. Chapter 11 deals with *Love* and discusses Parental Love, Old Folks, Spoken Words, Mother Teresa, Amazing Love, Learning from Lizards and Mother’s Love. Chapter 12 presents *Legacy*. This final chapter presents the following issues: Nothingness, Will to Live, The Nobel Prize, Grandfather’s Legacy, Dr. Wee Kim Wee, and Legacy. Once again all these chapters present very interesting episodes and interesting day-to-day experiences.

### **Legacy – What Is It?**

The term *legacy* is often used to refer to “something handed down or received from an ancestor or predecessor” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/legacy?s=t>). It generally has a positive connotation but it could also be used to refer to negative connections. Jimmy Teo has focused on both the positive and negative aspects of legacy, although the positive aspect is what he intends to emphasize and present to us. While the title is *A Legacy to My Sons*, the writing is so worded that there is really no gender exclusion intended by the word *sons*.

### **Aspire and Achieve!**

All of us will learn a lot about how to aspire and achieve greater things in our life – not merely material wealth, but material wealth that is available to help us grow in our spiritual and social life. In recent years there is greater emphasis and focus on soft skills in Indian colleges and universities to help students from economically and socially backward communities and students from rural areas, to improve their communication, business skills, etc. This book is great reading for all the teachers and students who aspire to achieve something notable in their lives and leave behind a mighty legacy. The most interesting thing about this book is that when we read it, it cultivates in us a desire to serve our community, family and nation even as we care for our own

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children. It creates in us a strong desire to live well truthfully with compassion and love and leave behind us a well-meaning legacy.

In this book we recognize and receive ancient wisdom communicated in modern language with modern examples, directly relevant to our context.

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