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# The Fine Art of People Power

**Jonathan Michael Bowman, J.D.**

**Keynote Leadership Speaker**

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# Go For Broke

**A short leadership story by Jonathan Michael Bowman, J.D.**

Have you ever set a goal that you did not achieve? Sometimes the first thing we think is that it was too big. However, often we do not achieve our goals because they are too small. That's right, I said too small!

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was only 26 years old when he captured national attention by leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. Rosa Parks' arrest for failing to give up her seat to a white man sparked one of the most notable protests in world history.

How many of you know what the original goal of the boycott was? If you're thinking that it was to eliminate segregation on city buses, unfortunately you are wrong. Coretta Scott King, the wife of Dr. King, recounted on the PBS series *Eyes on the Prize* that the initial purpose was to establish a "more humane system of segregation." But when the bus company refused to change, Mrs. King said that civil rights leaders decided to "go for broke" by aiming for an even bigger goal – the complete elimination of segregation on city buses.

They sued the bus company in federal court and, of course, they continued the boycott. The protesters created their own taxi-like service to pick up and transport one another around town. Others carpooled while some simply walked. This went on month after month. About a year after the boycott started – which was originally

intended to last only one day – the U.S. Supreme Court completely outlawed segregation on city buses. What an incredible victory. I am certain that the protesters did not know they could accomplish such an unimaginable goal.

This story holds a great leadership lesson for all of us in our professional and personal lives. If you do not achieve your goal at first, do not give up and do not make it smaller. Make it bigger! A big aspiration brings out the best in us. It heightens our creativity, increases our ingenuity and strengthens our resolve in a way that a smaller one does not. I encourage everybody to "go for broke" this year by making your goals bigger. History tells us that you can achieve more than you think you can. © 2017 Clear Picture Leadership®.

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