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In 1927, my German grandmother was born in an orphanage 15 kilometers east of Munich in the small market town of Kirchseeon. With blond hair and blue eyes, she was classified as Aryan, which her nation's soon-to-be chancellor, Adolf Hitler, would declare the "master race." Still, she fell in love with a Black American GI in World War II. He brought her to the States—but not before they married and had a biracial child, my uncle, in a Germany defined by Hitler's ideals.My grandmother was one of my earliest examples of leadership. She spoke her mind freely and knew exactly who she was, not looking for or requiring the approval of others. As a child, I saw a parallel between her strength and my own.At this point, I've spent nearly as much time studying leaders as I've been one. And with every leader I've observed—including my grandmother—it's become clear to me that those who achieve remarkable things and overcome seemingly impossible odds know how to do three things.When marathon runners begin at dawn, they often wrap themselves in trash bags to stay warm, and then dispose of these outer layers when the gun goes off. That's how our leadership team looks at ideas. Wearing them lightly and shedding them easily has helped our diverse team dominate in a homogeneous industry known for its reliance on tradition. Early on, when we were establishing our guiding principles for Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey, the most important one was "We do it with excellence or we don't do it at all." That meant that if the end result would be just "OK," we looked for a better option and pursued it quickly. Uncle Nearest has scaled up faster than any independent brand in the American whiskey industry's more than 250-year history; our success has depended on our ability to pivot as often as necessary and as fast as possible.One of the most stressful times in my career came when an investor, who was openly second-guessing my decisions, caused other investors to doubt my leadership. Because of this, I wound up putting unnecessary pressure on my team. Then, I recalled how leaders I'd studied had dealt with adversity without letting the weight of it roll down their org charts. I worked to develop that strength. Two of the greatest gifts we can give our people, I came to realize, are security and encouragement, no matter what difficulties we may face. When done right, outside observers see a swan floating gracefully on top of the water, without considering the feverish movement of her webbed feet underneath.For over a decade, my husband and I went through more than 10 fertility treatments, five rounds of in vitro fertilization, two unsuccessful adoption attempts, and an awful lot of money before concluding that the family we'd long dreamed of might not be a part of our purpose in this lifetime.Rather than wallowing in sorrow for the children we wouldn't have—Grant Edward and Sidney Elisabeth were the names we'd been planning for years—we looked within this loss for what could be gained.Soon after, I formed the investment company that owns Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey. My team members would feel like they were part of a family. I decided. They would feel encouraged to soar.Five years later, the leadership abilities that once were hard lessons now feel like second nature. And the life advances I would have made for my children, I've made instead for my company, Grant Sidney, and the people who help it grow.EXPLORE MORE Female Founders COMPANIES 1 What Is a Map Key? 2 Can Giraffes Talk? (And Other Weird Animal Myths You've Believed All Your Life) 3 What Is a Dangerous Blood Oxygen Level? 4 Is an Owl an Omnivore, a Herbivore or a Carnivore? 5 How Many Women Are in the World? 1 Shark Week 2021: Shark Info for Kids Who Are Fascinated By These Fish 2 How Many Football Fields Are in a Mile? 3 How Long Is a School Bus in Feet? 4 Why Dogs and Cats Do the Weird Things They Do 5 How Much Does a 2-Liter Bottle of Soda Weigh? 1 Why Do So Many Countries Celebrate Labour Day in May? 2 What Are Some Objects That Weigh One Pound? 3 What Number Is "IV"? 4 Inspiring Women Civil Rights Icons Who Fought for Equality 5 Festival of Sacrifice: The Past and Present of the Islamic Holiday of Eid al-Adha The Fight between Scipio Africanus and Hannibal, c. 1616-1618. Artist: Cesari, Bernardino (1565-1621). Heritage Images/Getty Images As the Romans fought the Carthaginians during the Second Punic War, Iberia became a field of conflict between the two sides, both aided by local natives. After 211 BCE the brilliant general Scipio Africanus campaigned, throwing Carthage out of Iberia by 206 BCE and beginning centuries of Roman occupation. Resistance continued in the area of central Portugal until locals were defeated c140 BCE. Euric (c. 440- 484), King of the Visigoths. Corbis via Getty Images / Getty Images With Roman control of Spain in chaos due to civil war, German groups the Sueves, Vandals, and Alans invaded. These were followed by the Visigoths, who invaded first on behalf of the emperor to enforce his rule in 416, and later that century to subdue the Sueves; the latter were confined to Galicia, a region partly corresponding to the modern north of Portugal and Spain. Visigoth King Liuvigild. Juan de Barroeta/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain The Kingdom of the Sueves was fully conquered in 585 CE by the Visigoths, leaving them dominant in the Iberian Peninsula and in full control of what we now call Portugal. The battle of Guadalete by the Spanish painter Martínez Cubells. Salvador Martínez Cubells/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain A Muslim force comprised of Berbers and Arabs attacked Iberia from North Africa, taking advantage of a near instant collapse of the Visigothic kingdom (the reasons for which historians still debate, the "it collapsed because it was backward" argument having been now firmly rejected); within a few years the south and centre of Iberia was Muslim, the north remaining under Christian control. A flourishing culture emerged in the new region which was settled by many immigrants. Coat of arms of the Kingdom of Leon. Ignacio Gavira, traced by B1mbo/Wikimedia Commons(CC-BY-SA-3.0 The Kings of Leon in the very north of the Iberian Peninsula, fighting as part of a Christian reconquest dubbed the Reconquista, repopulated settlements. One, a river port on the banks of the Douro, became known as Portucale, or Portugal. This was fought over but remained in Christian hands from 868. By the early tenth century, the name had come to identify a broad swathe of terrain, ruled by the Counts of Portugal, vassals of the Kings of Leon. These counts had a large degree of autonomy and cultural separation. King Alfonso I of Portugal. Corbis via Getty Images / Getty Images When Count Henrique of Portucale died, his wife Dona Teresa, daughter of the King of Leon, took the title of Queen. When she married a Galician nobleman the Portucalense noblemen revolted, afraid of being subject to Galicia. They rallied around Teresa's son, Afonso Henrique, who won a "battle" (which might have just been a tournament) in 1128 and expelled his mother. By 1140 he was calling himself the King of Portugal, aided by the King of Leon now calling himself Emperor, thus avoiding a clash. During 1143-79 Afonso dealt with the church, and by 1179 the Pope was also calling Afonso king, formalizing his independence from Leon and right to the crown. King Afonso II. Pedro Perret/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain King Afonso II, son of the first King of Portugal, faced difficulties in extending and consolidating his authority over Portuguese nobles used to autonomy. During his reign he fought a civil war against such nobles, needing the papacy to intervene to aid him. However, he did institute the first laws to affect the whole region, one of which barred people from leaving any more land to the church and got him excommunicated. King Alfonso III of Portugal. Antonio de Hollanda/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain As nobles seized back power from the throne under the ineffective rule of King Sancho II, the Pope deposed Sancho, in favor of the ex- king's brother, Afonso III. He went to Portugal from his home in France and won a two-year civil war for the crown. Afonso called the first Cortes, a parliament, and a period of relative peace ensued. Afonso also finished the Portuguese part of the Reconquista, seizing the Algarve and largely setting the country's borders. King Denis of Portugal. Antonio de Hollanda/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain Nicknamed the farmer, Denis is often the most highly regarded of the Burgundian dynasty. For he began the creation of a formal navy, founded the first university in Lisbon, promoted culture, founded one of the first insurance institutions for merchants and broadened trade. However, tensions grew among his nobles and he lost the Battle of Santarém to his son, who took the crown as King Afonso IV. Assassino de Dona Inês de Castro. Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain As Afonso IV of Portugal tried to avoid being drawn into Castile's bloody wars of succession, some Castilians appealed to Portuguese Prince Pedro to come and claim the throne. Afonso reacted to a Castilian attempt to exert pressure through Pedro's mistress, Inês de Castro, by having her killed. Pedro rebelled in anger against his father and war ensued. The result was Pedro taking the throne in 1357. The love story has influenced a good deal of Portuguese culture. Joao I monument. LuismiX / Getty Images When King Fernando died in 1383, his daughter Beatriz became queen. This was deeply unpopular, because she was married to King Juan I of Castile, and people rebelled fearing a Castilian takeover. Nobles and merchants sponsored an assassination which in turn triggered a revolt in favor of former king Pedro's illegitimate son Joao. He defeated two Castilian invasions with English aid and won the backing of the Portuguese Cortes, which ruled Beatriz was illegitimate. He thus became King Joao I in 1385 signed a perpetual alliance with England which still exists, and began a new form of monarchy. Duarte de Almeida holds the Portuguese royal standard during the Battle of Toro. José Bastos/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain Portugal went to war in 1475 to support the claims of King Afonso V of Portugal's niece, Joanna, to the Castilian throne against the rival, Isabella, wife of Ferdinand of Aragon. Afonso had one eye on supporting his family and another on trying to block the unification of Aragon and Castile, which he feared would swallow Portugal. Afonso was defeated at the Battle of Toro in 1476 and failed to gain Spanish help. Joanna renounced her claim in 1479 in the Treaty of Alcáçovas. Prince Henry of Portugal. Corbis via Getty Images While attempts at expanding into North Africa met limited success, Portuguese sailors pushed their frontiers and created a global empire. This was partly due to direct royal planning, as military voyages evolved into journeys of exploration; Prince Henry "the Navigator" was perhaps the single greatest driving force, founding a school for sailors and encouraging outward journeys to discover wealth, spread Christianity and sate curiosity. The empire included trading posts along the East African coasts and the Indies/Asia — where the Portuguese struggled with Muslim traders — and conquest and settlement in Brazil. The main hub of Portugal's Asian trade, Goa, became the nation's "second city." Manuel The Fortunate. Hulton Archive / Getty Images Coming to the throne in 1495, King Manuel I (known, perhaps wryly, as "the Fortunate") reconciled the crown and the nobility, which had been growing apart, instituted a nationwide series of reforms and modernized the administration including, in 1521, a revised series of laws which became the basis for the Portuguese legal system into the nineteenth century. In 1496 Manuel expelled all Jews from the kingdom and ordered the baptism of all Jewish children. The Manueline Era saw Portuguese culture flourish. The Battle of Alcácer Quibir. Author Unknown/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain Upon reaching his majority and taking control of the country, King Sebastião decided to make war upon the Muslims and crusade in North Africa. Intending to create a new Christian empire, he and 17,000 troops landed in Tangiers in 1578 and marched to Alcácer-Quibir, where the King of Morocco butchered them. Half of Sebastião's force was killed, including the king himself, and the succession passed to a childless Cardinal. Philip II. Heritage Images/Getty Images The 'disaster of Alcácer-Quibir' and the death of King Sebastião left the Portuguese succession in the hands of an elderly and childless Cardinal. When he died the line passed to King Philip II of Spain, who saw a chance to unite the two kingdoms and invaded, defeating his main rival; António, Prior of Crato, illegitimate child of a former prince. While Philip was welcomed by nobility and merchants seeing opportunity from the merger, many of the populace disagreed, and a period called the "Spanish Captivity" began. Corbis via Getty Images / Getty Images As Spain began to decline, so did Portugal. This, coupled with growing taxes and Spanish centralization, fermented revolution and the idea of a new independence in Portugal. In 1640, after Portuguese nobles were ordered to crush a Catalan rebellion on the other side of the Iberian peninsula, some organized a revolt, assassinated a minister, stopped Castilian troops from reacting and placed João, Duke of Braganza, on the throne. Descended from the monarchy, João took a fortnight to weigh his options and accept, but he did, becoming João IV. War with Spain followed, but this larger country was drained by European conflict and struggled. Peace and recognition of Portugal's independence from Spain came in 1668. Afonso VI. Giuseppe Dupra/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain King Afonso VI was young, disabled and mentally ill. When he married, a rumor went around that he was impotent and nobles, afraid for the future of the succession and a return to Spanish dominion, decided to back the king's brother Pedro. A plan was hatched: Afonso's wife persuaded the king to sack an unpopular minister, and she then fled to a convent and had the marriage annulled, whereupon Afonso was persuaded to resign in favor of Pedro. Afonso's former queen then married Pedro. Afonso himself was given a large stipend and deported, but later returned to Portugal, where he lived in isolation. The Battle of Malaga. Print Collector / Getty Images Portugal initially sided with the French claimant's side in the War of the Spanish Succession, but shortly after entered into the "Grand Alliance" with England, Austria and the Low Countries against France and her allies. Battles took place along the Portuguese-Spanish border for eight years, and at one point an Anglo-Portuguese force entered Madrid. Peace brought expansion for Portugal in their Brazilian holdings. Monument of Marques de Pombal. Danita Delimont / Getty Images In 1750 a former diplomat best known as the Marquês de Pombal entered the government. The new king, José, effectively gave him free rein. Pombal instituted massive reforms and changes in the economy, education, and religion, including expelling the Jesuits. He also ruled despotically, filling prisons with those who challenged his rule, or that of the royal authority which backed him up. When José became ill, he arranged for the regent who followed him, Dona Maria, to change course. She took power in 1777, starting a period known as the Viradeira, the Volte-face. Prisoners were released, Pombal removed and exiled and nature of Portuguese government slowly changed. The Battle of Vimeiro. Hulton Archive / Getty Images Portugal entered into the wars of the French Revolution in 1793, signing agreements with England and Spain, who aimed to restore the monarchy in France. In 1795 Spain agreed to peace with France, leaving Portugal stuck between its neighbor and its agreement with Britain; Portugal tried to pursue friendly neutrality. There were attempts to coerce Portugal by Spain and France before they invaded in 1807. The government fled to Brazil, and war began between Anglo-Portuguese forces and the French in a conflict known as the Peninsular War. Victory for Portugal and the expulsion of the French came in 1813. Portuguese Cortes 1822. Oscar Pereira da Silva/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain An underground organization set up in 1818 called Sinédrio attracted the support of some of Portugal's military. In 1820 they enacted a coup d'état against the government and assembled a "Constitutional Cortes" to create a more modern constitution, with the king sub-ordinate to parliament. In 1821 the Cortes summoned the king back from Brazil, and he came, but a similar call to his son was refused, and the man instead became emperor of an independent Brazil. Pedro IV of Portugal. Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain In 1826 the King of Portugal died and his heir, the Emperor of Brazil, refused the crown so as not to slight Brazil. Instead, he submitted a new Constitutional Charter and abdicated in favor of his underage daughter, Dona Maria. She was to marry her uncle, Prince Miguel, who would act as regent. The charter was opposed by some as too liberal, and when Miguel returned from exile he declared himself absolute monarch. Civil War between supporters of Miguel and Dona Maria followed, with Pedro abdicating as emperor to come over and act as regent to his daughter; their side won in 1834, and Miguel was banned from Portugal. Author Unknown/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain PD-US In 1836-38, the September Revolution had led to a new constitution, one somewhere between the 1822 Constitution and Charter of 1828. By 1844 there was public pressure to return to the more monarchist Charter, and the Minister of Justice, Cabral, announced its restoration. The next few years were dominated by the changes Cabral wrought — fiscal, legal, administrative and educational — in an era known as the Cabralismo. However, the minister made enemies and he was forced into exile. The next lead minister suffered a coup, and ten months of civil war followed between supporters of the 1822 and 1828 administrations. Britain and France intervened and peace was created in the Convention of Gramido in 1847. José Relvas proclaims the Republic from the balcony of the of City Hall. Joshua Benoit/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain By the end of the nineteenth century, Portugal had a growing republican movement. Attempts by the king to counter it failed, and on February 2, 1908, he and his heir were assassinated. King Manuel II then came to the throne, but a succession of governments failed to calm events. On October 3, 1910, the Republican revolt occurred, as part of the Lisbon garrison and armed citizens rebelled. When the navy joined them Manuel abdicated and left for England. A republican constitution was approved in 1911. António Oscar Fragoos Carmona. I, Henrique Matos/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0 After unrest in internal and world affairs produced a military coup in 1917, the assassination of the head of government, and more unstable republican rule, there was a feeling, not uncommon in Europe, that only a dictator could calm things. The full military coup took place in 1926; between then and 1933 Generals headed up the governments. Antonio De Oliveira Salazar. Evans / Getty Images In 1928 the ruling generals invited a Professor of Political Economy called António Salazar to join the government and solve a financial crisis. He was promoted to Prime Minister in 1933, whereupon he introduced a new constitution: the New State. The new regime, the Second Republic, was authoritarian, anti-parliament, anti-communist and nationalistic. Salazar ruled from 1933-68 when illness forced him to retire, and Caetano from 68-74. There was censorship, repression, and colonial wars, but industrial growth and public works still earn some supporters. Portugal remained neutral in World War 2. Corbis/VCG via Getty Images / Getty Images Growing upset in the military (and society) at Portugal's colonial struggles led to a disgruntled military organization called the Armed Forces movement causing a bloodless coup on April 25, 1974. The following president, General Spínola, then saw a power struggle between the AFM, communists and left-wing groups which led him to resign. Elections were held, contested by new political parties, and the Third Republic Constitution was drawn up, aiming to balance president and parliament. Democracy returned, and independence was granted to African colonies.



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