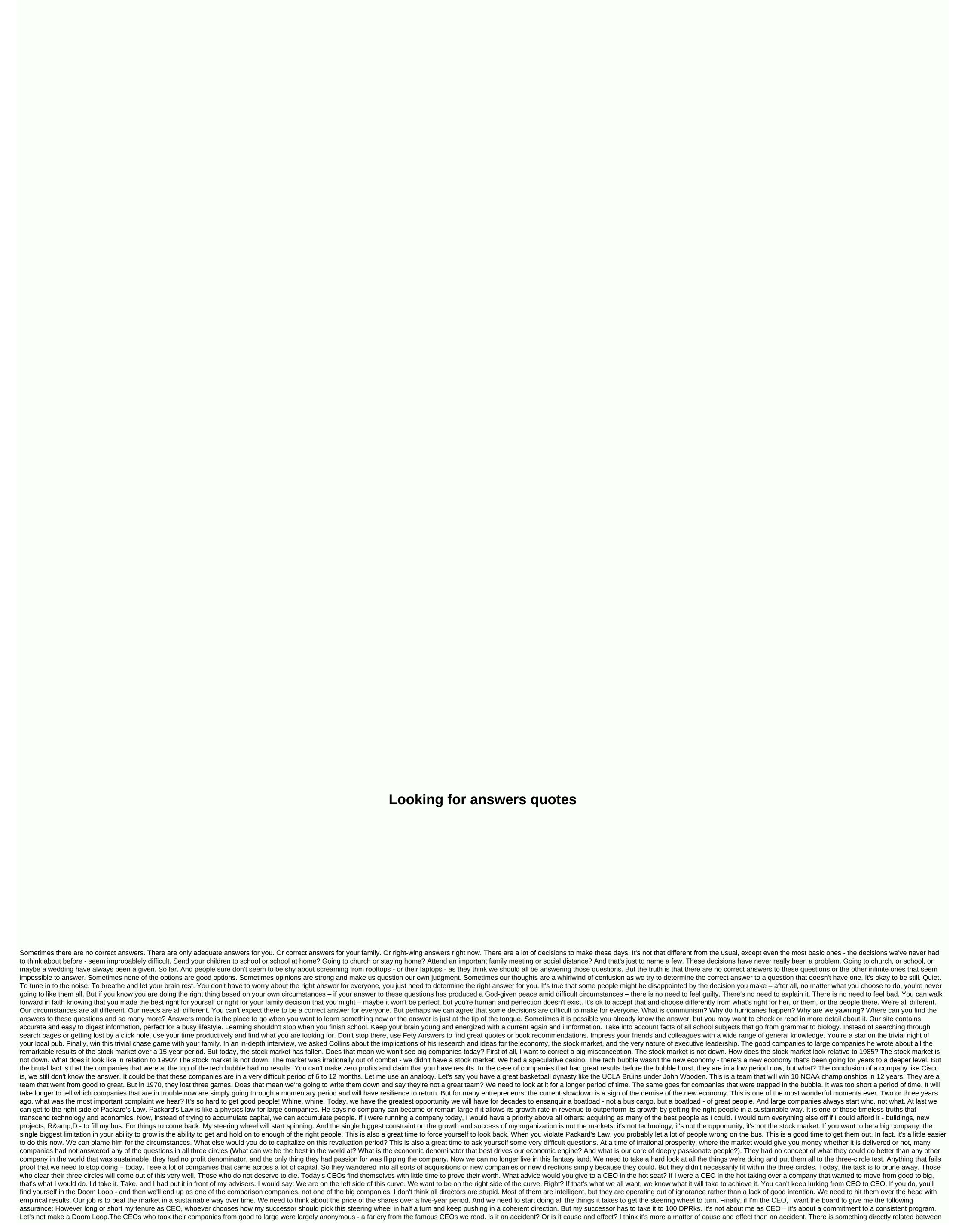
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the absence of celebrities and the presence of good to great results. What? First, when you have a celebrity, the company becomes the only genius with 1,000 followers. It creates the feeling that it's all really about the CEO. And that leads to all sorts of problems – whether the person disappears or if the person turns out not to be a genius after all. On a deeper level, we found that because leaders do something great, their ambition should be for the greatness of work and enterprise rather than for themselves. That doesn't mean they don't have an ego. That doesn't mean they have no needs. This means that at the point of decision after decision point - at critical junctures when Pick A would favor his ego and choice B would favor the company and its work - time and again leaders choose Choice B. Celebrity CEO, at those same decision points, are more likely to favor self and ego over enterprise and work. Like anonymous CEOs, most of the companies that made the transformation from good to large are not hereded. What does that tell us? The truth is that most people are not working on things anymore of the world. They are doing a real job – which means most of the time they are making a heck of a lot of drudgery with only a few points of excitement. Some people are putting bread in the oven. Some are building retail stores. The real work of the economy is done by people who make cars, who sell real estate, who run grocery stores and banks. So one of the big conclusions of this study is that you can be in a big company and be doing it in steel, in pharmacies, in grocery stores. It's just not the case that if you're not in Silicon Valley, you're not one has the right to talk about their company, their industry, or the type of business they are in - ever again. Were the 11 companies that benefited the transformation because of their anonymity? One of the great advantages that these companies had, nobody cared! Kroger began its transition; Nucor began its transition; Nobody expected much. They could subpromize and overfree. In fact, if I were taking over a company and trying to make it go from good to big, I would tell my vice president of communications that his job was to make everyone think that we were constantly on the brink of condemnation. In the course of our study, we actually printed the transcripts of CEO submissions to analysts by good companies at large companies and comparison companies. We read all these. And it's amazing. Good people always talk about the challenges they are building, the things they care about. You go to companies, they are constantly hypnotized themselves, they are selling the future – but they are never offering results. If I'm not CEO, how do good lessons apply to great for me? Good to large concepts are applicable to any situation – as long as you can choose the people around you. That's the crucial thing. But fundamentally, we really do - we have a lot of discretion about the people in our lives, the people we decide to leave on our bus, whether it's in our department at work or in our personal lives. But the basic message is this: Build your own steering wheel. You can do that. You can start building momentum into something for which you have responsibility. You can build a great department. You can build a great church community. You can take each of the ideas from good to great and apply them to your own life. What has your study taught you about business change in general? Is it essentially a message to go back to basics? Very rarely do significant changes ever lead to results in a sustainable way. This is one of the very important findings of the book. We started with 1,435 companies did. Let's go to this fact for a moment. The fact is, it doesn't happen very often. Why not? Because we don't know what the hell we're doing! And why we know what we're doing, they throw us into all sorts of things that don't produce results. We end up like a handful of primitives dancing around the campfire singing on the moon. What I feel strongly about is that we need some science to understand what it really takes to change things. Back to basics? No, it's forward to understanding. Why does it go back to basics to say that CEOs should be ambitious for their companies and not for themselves? Why do you go back to basics to do who and people wonder first and what and where do you ask second? Since when do you go back to the basics for a company to start with a question like, Why have we sucked for 100 years, and what are the brutal facts we have to face? Why do you go back to the basics to say that stop-doing lists are more important than to-do lists? And since when has he gone back to basics to say that technology is just an accelerator and not a creator of anything? I don't think these concepts go back to basics. Because if they are, we should be able to step back in time and find that people use these ideas. People don't – so there are only 11 out of 1,435. So, no, it hasn't gone back to basics. It's forward to understanding. What is your assessment of the new economy? We've seen a lot of backlash against change, and we've seen a lot of backlash against change. How do you make sense of all this? The enormous changes that are taking place around us make it the most exciting time in history to be alive. It's so much fun. All these changes -changes in technology, globalisation- are brutal fact of the Internet and then asked: How does it fit into our three circles, and how can we use it to turn our steering wheel faster? You never ignore changes – hit them head on like brutal facts, or you come to them with a great sense of glee and emotion. This change, this new technology opens up a way to prevail, to be even better as a company. All the big companies took changes and used them in their favor, often with great glee. When new pianos arrived, Mozart did not hang up his music. He didn't say: There are these new pianos! The harpsichord is out of the way, so I'm washed as a composer! He thought, This is so cool! I can do it out loud with piano forte! This is really neat! He maintained the discipline of writing great music and, at the same time, embraced with great joy and excitement the invention of the pianos. With all the change around us, we have to be like Mozart. We maintain great discipline over our music, but at the same time, we embrace things that can allow us to make even bigger music. Alan M. Webber is a fast founding company founding Jim Collins (jimcollins@aol.com) wrote the essay Built to Flip in the March 2000 issue of Fast Company. His new book, Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And others won't, it will be available in October. October.

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