Leadership Quotes

Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing. - Warren Bennis, Ph.D. "On Becoming a Leader"

The best example of leadership, is leadership by example.
- Jerry McClain of Seattle, WA

If it's a good idea, go ahead and do it. It is much easier to apologize than it is to get permission.
- Admiral Grace Hopper

The most important quality in a leader is that of being acknowledged as such.
- Andre Maurois

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.
- Eleanor Roosevelt

Leadership in today's world requires far more than a large stock of gunboats and a hard fist at the conference table.
- Hubert H. Humphrey

All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.
- John Kenneth Galbraith, U.S. economist "The Age of Uncertainty"

The real leader has no need to lead - he is content to point the way.
- Henry Miller
It's amazing how many cares disappear when you decide not to be something, but to be someone. - Coco Chanel

Most of the ladies and gentlemen who mourn the passing of the nation's leaders wouldn't know a leader if they saw one. If they had the bad luck to come across a leader, they would find out that he might demand something from them, and this impertinence would put an abrupt and indignant end to their wish for his return.
- Lewis H. Lapham

Leadership consists not in degrees of technique but in traits of character; it requires moral rather than athletic or intellectual effort, and it imposes on both leader and follower alike the burdens of self-restraint.
- Lewis H. Lapham

I am a leader by default, only because nature does not allow a vacuum.
- Bishop Desmond Tutu

If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities.
- Maya Angelou

People ask the difference between a leader and a boss. . . The leader works in the open, and the boss in covert. The leader leads, and the boss drives.
- Theodore Roosevelt
The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. . . . The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully.
- Walter Lippmann

There is no such thing as a perfect leader either in the past or present, in China or elsewhere. If there is one, he is only pretending, like a pig inserting scallions into its nose in an effort to look like an elephant.
- Liu Shao-ch’i

Our flag is red, white and blue, but our nation is a rainbow-red, yellow, brown, black and white-and we’re all precious in God’s sight.

If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun.
- Katharine Hepburn

* E pluribus unum. *(Out of many, one.)*

If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.
In organizations, real power and energy is generated through relationships. The patterns of relationships and the capacities to form them are more important than tasks, functions, roles, and positions.
- Margaret Wheatly *Leadership and the New Science*

Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with the important matters.
- Albert Einstein

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.
- Karen Kaiser Clark

The quality of leadership, more than any other single factor, determines the success or failure of an organization.
- Fred Fiedler & Martin Chemers *Improving Leadership Effectiveness*

Don’t be afraid to take a big step when one is indicated. You can’t cross a chasm in two small steps.
- David Loyd George

There is no contest between the company that buys the grudging compliance of its work force and the company that enjoys the enterprising participation of its employees.
- Ricardo Sempler

Excellence is not an accomplishment. It is a spirit, a never-ending process.
- Lawrence M. Miller

The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you.
- Max DePree
When what you are doing isn't working, you tend to do more of the same and with greater intensity.
- Dr. Bill Maynard & Tom Champoux *Heart, Soul and Spirit*

Every organization must be prepared to abandon everything it does to survive in the future.
- Peter Drucker

A friend of mine characterizes leaders simply like this: "Leaders don't inflict pain. They bear pain."
- Max DePree

Ah well! I am their leader, I really ought to follow them!
- Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin

Dictators ride to and fro upon tigers which they dare not dismount. And the tigers are getting hungry.
- Winston Churchill

A new leader has to be able to change an organization that is dreamless, soulless and visionless ... someone's got to make a wake up call.
- Warren Bennis

I used to think that running an organization was equivalent to conducting a symphony orchestra. But I don't think that's quite it; it's more like jazz. There is more improvisation.
- Warren Bennis

When the effective leader is finished with his work, the people say it happened naturally.
- Lao Tse
Most of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to get their jobs done
- Peter Drucker

I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers
- Ralph Nader

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity
- George Patton

To lead people, walk beside them ...
As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence.
The next best, the people honor and praise.
The next, the people fear;
and the next, the people hate ...
When the best leader's work is done the people say, "We did it ourselves!"
- Lao-tsu

Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes... but no plans.
- Peter Drucker

Hell, there are no rules here--we're trying to accomplish something.
- Thomas A. Edison

Good plans shape good decisions. That's why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true. -
Lester R. Bittel *The Nine Master Keys of Management*
Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life.
- Sandra Carey

Understanding human needs is half the job of meeting them.
- Adlai Stevenson

Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability, as well as determination not to accept failure.
- Admiral Arleigh A. Burke

Lead and inspire people. Don't try to manage and manipulate people. Inventories can be managed but people must be lead.
- Ross Perot

We must become the change we want to see.
- Mahatma Gandhi

Drowning in data, yet starved of information
- Ruth Stanat in *The Intelligent Organization*

A competent leader can get efficient service from poor troops, while on the contrary an incapable leader can demoralize the best of troops.
- General of the Armies John J. Pershing

The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.
- Vincent T. Lombardi

Where there is no vision, the people perish.
- Proverbs 29:18
I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors.
- Henry David Thoreau

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.
- Mother Theresa

An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success.
- Stephen R. Covey, Principle-centered Leadership

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.
- Abraham Lincoln

One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.
- Helen Keller

It is important that an aim never be defined in terms of activity or methods. It must always relate directly to how life is better for everyone. . . . The aim of the system must be clear to everyone in the system. The aim must include plans for the future. The aim is a value judgment.
- W. Edwards Deming

The very essence of leadership is its purpose. And the purpose of leadership is to accomplish a task. That is what leadership does--and what it does is more important than what it is or how it works.
- Colonel Dandridge M. Malone
We know not where our dreams will take us, but we can probably see quite clearly where we'll go without them.
- Marilyn Grey

It is not a question of how well each process works, the question is how well they all work together.
- Lloyd Dobens and Clare Crawford-Mason Thinking About Quality

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

The leader has to be practical and a realist, yet must talk the language of the visionary and the idealist.
- Eric Hoffer

In war, three quarters turns on personal character and relations; the balance of manpower and materials counts only for the remaining quarter.
- Napoleon I

To manage a system effectively, you might focus on the interactions of the parts rather than their behavior taken separately.
- Russell L. Ackoff

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.
- Albert Einstein

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and will to carry on.
- Walter J. Lippmann
Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it.
- Marian Anderson

You may have afresh start any moment you choose, for this thing that we call ‘failure’ is not the falling down, but the staying down.
- Mary Pickford

People are more easily led than driven.
- David Harold Fink

Leadership has a harder job to do than just choose sides. It must bring sides together.
- Jesse Jackson

What is character but the determination of incident what is incident but the illustration of character?
- Henery James

The trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more.
- Erica Jong

No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself, or to get all the credit for doing it.
- Andrew Carnegie

The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality.
- Max DePree *The Art of Leadership*

Processes don't do work, people do.
- John Seely Brown

Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions.
- Harold Geneen
The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.
- Henry Kissinger

The quality of a leader is reflected in the standards they set for themselves.
- Ray Kroc, Founder of McDonald's

Jingshen is the Mandarin word for spirit and vivacity. It is an important word for those who would lead, because above all things, spirit and vivacity set effective organizations apart from those that will decline and die.
- James L. Hayes *Memos for Management: Leadership*

Uncertainty will always be part of the taking charge process.
- Harold Geneen

Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.
- Thomas Alva Edison

You can use all the quantitative data you can get, but you still have to distrust it and use your own intelligence and judgment.
- Alvin Toffler

Remember that it is far better to follow well than to lead indifferently.
- John G. Vance

The only real training for leadership is leadership.
- Antony Jay

Quality has to be caused, not controlled.
- Philip Crosby *Reflections on Quality*
Probably my best quality as a coach is that I ask a lot of challenging questions and let the person come up with the answer.
- Phil Dixon

Don’t be afraid of the space between your dreams and reality. If you can dream it you can make it so.
- Belva Davis

The future is taking shape now in our own beliefs and in the courage of our leaders. Ideas and leadership -- not natural or social ‘forces’ -- are the prime movers in human affairs.
- George Roche, A World Without Heroes

The art of leading, in operations large or small, is the art of dealing with humanity, of working diligently on behalf of men, of being sympathetic with them, but equally, of insisting that they make a square facing toward their own problems.
- S. L. A. Marshall *Men Against Fire*

And when we think we lead, we are most led.
- Lord Byron

Never hire or promote in your own image. It is foolish to replicate your strength and idiotic to replicate your weakness. It is essential to employ, trust, and reward those whose perspective, ability, and judgment are radically different from yours. It is also rare, for it requires uncommon humility, tolerance, and wisdom.
- Dee W. Hock, Fast Company

All serious daring starts from within.
- Eudora Welty
. . . As we, the leaders, deal with tomorrow, our task is not to try to make perfect plans.
. . . Our task is to create organizations that are sufficiently flexible and versatile that they can take our imperfect plans and make them work in execution. That is the essential character of the learning organization.
- Gordon R. Sullivan & Michael V. Harper

In matters of style, swim with the current;
In matters of principle, stand like a rock.
- T. Jefferson

If you think you can do a thing or that you cannot do a thing, in either case you are right.
- Henry Ford

When nothing is sure, everything is possible.
- Margaret Drabble

Think of managing change as an adventure. It tests your skills and abilities. It brings forth talent that may have been dormant. Change is also a training ground for leadership. When we think of leaders, we remember times of change, innovation and conflict. Leadership is often about shaping a new way of life. To do that, you must advance change, take risks and accept responsibility for making change happen.
- Charles E. Rice, CEO of Barnett Bank

Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.
- Winston Churchill

Not everything that is faced can be changed.
But nothing can be changed until it is faced.
- James Baldwin
The world is round and the place which may seem like the end, may also be only the beginning.
- Ivy Baker Priest

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