

Spirituality and Leadership (Harnessing the wisdom, guidance, and power of the soul) by Alan E. Nelson, NavPress, Colorado Springs, 2002
(50 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. What to Do With Time Given Us.

Very early in the movie *The Lord of the Rings* (2002), Frodo says he wishes the master ring had not been found in his lifetime. “So do I,” said Gandolf, “and so do all who all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”
(Page 10)

2. Spiritual Leadership Is Different Than Spirituality and Leadership.

Any elementary school child can tell you that when you mix yellow paint with blue paint, the resulting color is green. To understand spiritual leadership, we can't merely study leadership and then study spirituality, assuming that the two different elements will naturally combine. Spiritual leadership has a color of its own. The characteristics of spiritual leadership are at times significantly different from the two individual elements.

If you don't understand both spirituality and leadership and how they interact, you'll be far less competent at leading in the coming years.

Cutting-edge technology, product positioning, and market innovations fade in comparison to what will make twenty-first-century groups prevail.

Dynamic organizations know that their strongest assets and liabilities are people. Individuals who unleash the synergy among people are called leaders.(Page 12)

3. Effective Leaders Are Social Artists.

Because effective leaders are social artists, they're both adapters to environmental influences and culture sculptors. (Page 13)

4. People Are Hungry for Spiritual Leadership.

What happens when you get hungry? Your stomach begins to gurgle and rumble. Well, here at the start of the twenty-first century, our culture is growling for spiritual leaders—men and women who understand both spirituality and leadership.

Our society seems to be crying out for people with both dominate characteristics. Leaders of the past sometimes dabbled in spiritual and religious activities, either for their private benefit or to be perceived as moral by others. But politically correct religiosity will not cut it in the high-demand world of the twenty-first century. (Page 13)

5. Leaders Need to Lead from the Soul.

Leaders will need to go beyond their minds and lead from the wisdom, guidance, and power that comes from the soul. People yearn for those who will lead with head and heart and who will recognize the spiritual side of the people they lead.(Page 13-14)

6. The Bible’s Teachings Are Timeless.

While many contemporary and historic groups have justifies their selfish actions (such as “holy” wars and hate crimes) and attitudes with the Bible, those groups don’t represent classic Christianity. Rouge associates—people who are out of line with stated values—exist in every group. But does every employee in your company adequately represent the organization all the time? No. And not every action done in the name of Christ represents the truth of Christianity.

However, the timelessness of the Bible’s teachings provides enduring boundaries for us to define spirituality. (Page 15)

7. Leadership is More and More Complex.

Leader is more complex than ever, requiring leading beyond our means.
As society becomes more mobile, dysfunctional, and competitive in vying for people’s attention, leading has become more and more difficult. The rapid turnover of information, innovations, and competition means that to survive, a leader must look beyond himself or herself for answers. (Page 16)

8. Spiritual Leaders Allow the Holy Spirit to Use Them.

Many leaders lack strong people skills because they’re primarily task oriented. For them, the added power of the fruit of the Spirit makes up for critical weak points. As a result, their followers feel loved and appreciated. Spiritual leaders use this resource as a way to motivate, recruit, and receive commitments from team members. (Page 17)

9. Spiritual Leaders Are Not Separated From Their Soul.

Leaders who are spiritual can't separate their souls from leading. They're just as comfortable and natural in the office and at business meetings as they are in their worship and devotional lives. People who disengage their leading from their spirituality will be seen as hypocrites and as untrustworthy. (Page 17)

10. Strong from the Inside Out.

If a leader's character lacks moral and ethical fiber, his or her decisions will be weak and unreliable. Spiritual leaders are less apt to succumb to the pressures of leading because they are strong from the inside out. They're fixed to a different compass. (Page 18)

11. People Respond Voluntarily to Good Leadership.

Leadership is influence that people respond to voluntarily. Anything else is coercion, not leadership. Bullies don't lead; they intimidate. Leadership is influence, but not all influence is leadership—just as all dads are men, but not all men are dads. (Page 19)

12. Leadership Changes Things.

Leadership is about changing things as a group or team. It strategically aligns people with resources to accomplish mutual objectives. Management is about maintaining and doing things right. But leadership is about progressing and doing the right thing. It involves power, resources, communication, vision, conflict, and people skills balanced with a task orientation. (Page 19)

13. Spiritual Leadership.

Spiritual Leadership: This is the intersection of the above characteristics, where individuals are spiritually in tune with God and live under His direction, as well as gifted and skilled as persons of influence among others. (Page 20)

14. Spirituality Maximizes Leading.

Spiritual leadership isn't just being more spiritual than others. Everyone can become a spiritual person and grow in that aspect of his or her life. God has given us leaders, specifically as a way to catalyze growth and

change in churches, businesses, and organizations so that others can be more fulfilled and served. Spiritual leadership isn't just about leaders who have a personal faith or who claim to be spiritual. It is about bringing together the two elements so that spirituality maximizes leading in ways that nothing else can. (Page 20-21)

15. Leaders Influence toward Change.

Leadership is a social relationship in which people allow individuals to influence them toward intentional change. Leadership involves more than leaders and what they do. Power ultimately resides in the followers or collaborators. (Page 23)

16. Leaders Have Vision.

Leaders are individuals who are able to see and articulate vision, pursue change through aligning people with resources, and organize people and systems to accomplish these objectives. Leadership is influence, but not all influence is leadership. (Page 23)

17. Leadership Definition.

Definition: Leadership is the social process in which people confer influence to individuals, so they can organize and assist the people in achieving what could not otherwise be accomplished. (Page 24)

18. Leadership Deals With Leadership Process.

Leadership deals with relationship—people working with each other toward a common objective. The word “process” means that leadership is not so much what is achieved, but *how* things are achieved. There are multiple ways to achieve goals, such as through individual accomplishments, managerial processes, or coercive means. (Page 24)

19. Leader Needs to Actually Lead.

Because leadership is not what leaders do, we should address a common myth regarding leadership mentoring. Some people believe that one of the best ways to create a new leader is for them to shadow a leader and observe leadership. The problem with logic is that at any given time, a person who leads may not be leading. Mentoring is vital, but should include open discussions regarding which situations require leadership and which do not. Like most of us, leaders wear multiple hats. Sometimes a

person who leads is teaching or managing, or being a father/husband or wife/mother. At other times, a person who leads is being a friend, or a child of God, or a follower on another team. To understand leadership, you need to be able to discern when a leader is actually leading. (Page 25)

20. Having the Right Vision.

The story is told of two bricklayers working on a building. When someone asked the first laborer what he was making the man responded, "Fifteen dollars an hour." When the other man was asked what he was making he answered, "A cathedral that will point people to God." That man was fired, because he was supposed to be building a garage. (Page 26)

21. Leadership Is Different Than Management.

The problem is in using the terms interchangeably. A bad apple is not a banana. There are good and bad apples and there good and bad bananas. They're just different fruits. In the same way, leadership is different from management. Bad leadership isn't management: It's just bad leadership. Good management isn't leadership; it's just good management. (Page 27)

22. Leadership Is About Making Changes, Pursuing New Venues.

Management is primarily about maintenance, establishing balance, and keeping an organization functioning day to day. Leadership is about making changes, pursuing new venues, and cultivating a strong vision within the culture. Organizations always need good management. They only need leadership when change is required. By trying to change things that aren't broken, leaders can actually do damage to the organizations that are functioning well. But with the multitude of changes happening in the twenty-first century, leaders are in demand more than ever. (Page 27)

23. Leadership Rejects the Status Quo.

Usually, leadership and management are kissing cousins, but not identical twins. At times, they feud, because management and leadership can be counterproductive to each other. Management seeks to maintain and to reject influence that would change an organization; leadership strives to change and reject status quo, especially when maintenance spells long-term dysfunction or death. (Page 27-28)

24. Knowing When and Where Leading Is Requires.

Those with a higher degree of leading aptitude know when and where leading is required and are able to lead at that time. To lead when you should be teaching, marketing, and following is dysfunctional. To manage, market, teach, and follow when you should be leading also reflects incompetence. (Page 29)

25. Few Are Wired to Lead.

Effective leaders demonstrate initiative, vision, and self-discipline, all of which are important individual traits to possess. But having those characteristics does not make someone a leader. If everyone were a leader, there'd be chaos. Only a small percentage of people are wired to lead and a few others can develop leader skills, but the majority of people will never be leaders, regardless of what motivators want us to believe. (Page 31)

26. Effective Organizations Have a Head to Provide Direction.

Effective organizations have a family component to them, families long for a parent to provide direction, security, and a sense of togetherness.

Maintaining a loving bond between siblings (or other team members) and working out differences is a parental role as well. When leaders fail to understand this or dismiss it because “we’re all adults here,” they leave unmet needs in the people they serve; and as a result they weaken leadership. (Page 38)

27. The Best of Us Need Outside Governance.

Policing a team will be minimal among more mature people, but sometimes the best of us can use some outside governance. Keeping the rules, obeying standard operating procedures, and establishing a peaceful community isn't easy, but it's often needed for leadership to thrive. Leaders who are uncomfortable with this hat can alienate people and lose control. But at critical times, policing a group can rise commitment. (Page 38)

28. Leaders Make Tough Calls.

Running from tough calls or delegating leader decision reflects a lack of courage. A leader who can't make a decision or is unwilling to make tough calls will lose respect and diminish leadership. Many leadership moments aren't black and white—they're subjective; and while you might make a wrong decision, indecision is usually an even worse choice. (Page 39)

29. Leaders Become Counselors.

Effective leaders must become counselors at times, because working with people means more than just employing their talents. (Page 39)

30. Leaders Are Involved in Personal Lives.

Leaders who refuse to get involved in the personal lives of those they reduce the respect and loyalty of their followers. (Page 39)

31. Being a Friend At Strategic Times.

Effective leaders are rarely best friends with those they lead, but they must wear the friend hat at strategic times. (Page 39)

32. Encourage Others Personally.

If you don't know how to behave as a friend when it's appropriate, you'll diminish your ability to enjoy people and to encourage them personally. (Page 39)

33. Give Advice and Encouragement.

The leader who fails to give advice or provide encouragement is slacking. (Page 40)

34. People-Building Business.

Leaders are in the people building business. Helping people grow can require moral and spiritual input. Failure to recognize these situations or avoiding them due to incompetence or reticence will diminish leadership strength. (Page 41)

35. Rely on Spirit's Leading.

The spiritual leader must rely heavily on discernment and sensitivity to the Spirit's leading, and on a godly willingness and ability to respond appropriately; because people matter so much to God. (Page 41)

36. God Doesn't Contradict Himself.

God doesn't contradict Himself. He won't lead us against his stated guidelines or character. (Page 49)

37. Submit to God's Leading.

The big difference between people who are spiritually authentic and those who are wannabes is that the former follow when the Spirit leads them into deserts and potentially dangerous scenarios. The fainthearted pullbacks, justify avoiding deserts, and plot their own trails. But once we start pulling back on the reins, we find it easier to do it each successive time. Spiritual people fight this temptation and submit to God's leading. (Page 49)

38. Rely on God.

Spiritual leaders rely on God, lead to serve, take risk out of faith rather than ego, and listen to the Spirit regarding timing, decisions, and relationship issues. In some ways, leading is no different from any God given gift: we are tempted to live life on our own, to take control, and to be the captains of our own souls. (Page 52)

39. Guard Against Own Power and Resources.

Leaders who want to be spiritual leaders must guard against relying on their own power and resources instead of God's. (Page 58)

40. Surrender the Right to Ourselves; Become a Servant.

Think about how many times we justify our insensitive, self-centered behaviors: "That's just the way I am." "I'm an only child." "I'm a middle child." "I'm a redhead." "I had harsh potty training." "I'm from a dysfunctional family," "I _____" (fill in your favorite). This kind of blanket comments don't give us license to be jerks. At best, they may help others understand why something we're jerk-like. But surrendering our right to be ourselves is one of the qualities of servanthood. This is a position of ultimate power—overcoming ourselves. Spiritual leaders understand that unless they're able to implement self-denial, they'll never realize their full potential at leading. (Page 62-63)

41. Working Together.

Leadership is about people working together toward mutual outcomes. (Page 65)

42. No Benefit, Spiritual Leaders Still Lead.

The best kind of love is tough and tenacious. It doesn't put up with flimsy excuses or self-destructive behavior. Love seeks what is best for people.

Looking out for the welfare of others is the ultimate role of a leader. Self-centered leading is a sham and nothing short of organizational embezzlement and misappropriation of resources. Leadership wasn't created for the benefit of those who lead. Spiritual leaders are servants. If leaders benefit from leading, so be it. But if they don't benefit, true spiritual leaders will lead anyway. (Page 66)

43. No Excuse for Unloving Behavior.

It's clear that spiritual leaders can never excuse their unloving behaviors by saying, "I can't love well, I'm the leader." Strength and love are not mutually exclusive. Maintaining the precarious balance between strength and love over the long haul is impossible without the prevailing power that only comes from God. Spiritual leaders must graciously and wisely weave together power and grace, strength and love, never exclude one from the other.

If I exclude incredible leader abilities and help my organization achieve great things, but do not have love, I have failed as a spiritual leader.
(Page 67)

44. Servants, Not Leaders.

Most of us in service organizations would describe our leading as a way to serve others. The problem is, this doesn't go far enough, because we need to see ourselves first and foremost as servants. Servants use whatever they have at their disposal to serve others. Sometimes it's a towel and basin. Or it might be cooking. Still other times cut hair, mow yards, answer phones, change diaper, manage businesses, sell, teach, coach, drive cars, or do secretarial work.

Spiritual leaders see themselves primarily as servants, not leaders. Leading is merely a tool God has entrusted with us to use as a vehicle to serve others. (Page 70)

45. Leaders Are Go-getters.

The challenge of prayer for leaders is that people who are gifted at leading tend to find the process of being still before God a torturous one. They would rather just do something and hope that God blesses it. Leaders tend to be go-getters who are tempted to rely on their own gifting. As a result, most spiritual leaders have to work hard at their prayer life, constantly

governing their desire to act before spending adequate time in prayer.
(Page 76)

46. Prayer Is Not Wasted.

When time is of the essence, prayer is not wasted effort. Spiritual leaders go to God first, knowing that their best chance for long-term success is to discover God's will. (Page 79)

47. Invest in Reading and Mind, Body, and Soul Are At Their Best.

At a leadership conference, participants were instructed to write down what they thought was the percentage of energy and time a leader should invest in leading up (those over you), leading down (those under you), leading laterally (team members), and leading inwardly (developing yourself as a leader).

When attendees were finished guessing, the speaker revealed the advice of one leadership guru. Gasps were heard across the auditorium when he stated that most effective leadership balance was 10 percent on lateral leading, 20 percent on leading down, 20 percent on leading up, and 50 percent on inner development. In other words, the most effective leaders invest significant time and energy making sure that the "ax is sharp"—that they are well read and that their mind, body, and soul are at their best.

When the inner leader becomes depleted, it adversely affects everything the leader touches. When the inner leader is nourished, the entire organization benefits. (Page 83-84)

48. Spiritual People Are In a Bible Study.

While you can show up for Bible study and worship and not recharge, I've rarely seen spiritually hot people who were not in regular large- and small-groups worship and Bible study. (Page 100)

49. Operate From an Internal Focus of Control.

Another reason a leader's attitude is so vital is that a majority of followers have external locus of control. That's a fancy phrase meaning that people allow events and circumstances outside of themselves to control their perceptions and emotions. "It's a crummy day; looks like rain." "Oh no, the stock market dropped another fifty points." "I can't believe what that

guy in traffic did to me.” Listen to casual conversations and you’ll hear people reveal their external orientation.

On the other hand, leaders need to be people who operate primarily from an internal focus of control. That’s why spiritual leading becomes an important part of organizational effectiveness, because the internal world is where leaders secure their ability to determine their attitudes and responses to external events.(Page 104)

50. Man Believes the Negative Faster.

In Numbers 13-14 when the ten spied brought back negative reports, Moses, Joshua, and Caleb maintained a “can-do” attitude. Unfortunately, their influence was too small to significantly raise the temperature of the masses, and they failed to go forward. The human propensity to believe negative reports faster than positive ones is probably a symptom of our spiritual depravity. (Page 105)