

The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader, by John C. Maxwell, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999) [87 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols]

Introduction

1. Leadership Develops Daily

The Law of Process says that leadership develops daily, not in a day. Part of a leader's development comes from learning the laws of leadership, for those are the tools that teach how leadership works. But *understanding* leadership and actually *doing* it are two different activities. [Page x]

2. Character Counts

Leaders are effective because of who they are on the inside – in the qualities that make them up as people. And to go to the highest level of leadership, people have to develop these traits from the inside out. [Page x]

Chapter 1. Character: Be A Piece of the Rock

3. Rally to a Common Purpose

“Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence.” – Bernard Montgomery, British Field Marshall [Page 1]

4. Never Deny Your Convictions

“Never ‘for the sake of peace and quiet’ deny your own experience or convictions.” – Dag Hammarskjöld, Statesman and Nobel Peace Prize Winner [Page 1]

5. Crisis Reveals Character

How a leader deals with the circumstances of life tells you many things about his character. Crisis doesn't necessarily make character, but it certainly does reveal it. Adversity is a crossroads that makes a person choose one of two paths: character or compromise. [Pages 3-4]

6. Character and Actions Are Inseparable

Anyone can say that he has integrity, but action is the real indicator of character. Your character determines who you are. Who you are determines what you see. What you see determines what you do. That's why you can never separate a

leader's character from his actions. If a leader's actions and intentions are continually working against each other, then look to his character to find out why. [Page 4]

7. Flawed Leaders Are Not Followed

Followers do not trust leaders whose character they know to be flawed, and they will not continue following them. [Page 5]

8. Ethics Are Without Question

Alan Bernard, president of Mid Park, Inc., stated, "The respect that leadership must have requires that one's ethics be without question. A leader not only stays above the line between right and wrong, he stays well clear of the 'gray areas.'" [Page 6]

Chapter 2. Charisma: The First Impression Can Seal the Deal

9. One Performs Better with Approval

"I have yet to find the man, however exalted his station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval than under a spirit of criticism." - Charles Schwab, Industrialist [Page 8]

10. See the Good in People

According to Jacques Wiesel, "A survey of one hundred self-made millionaires showed only one common denominator. These highly successful men and women could only see the good in people." [Page 11]

11. Encourage Others

Benjamin Disraeli understood and practiced this concept, and it was one of the secrets of his charisma. He once said, "The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own." If you appreciate others, encourage them, and help them reach their potential, they will love you for it. [Page 11]

Chapter 3. Commitment: It Separates Doers from Dreamers

12. People Follow Sacrifice

"People do not follow uncommitted leaders. Commitment can be displayed in a full range of matters to include the work hours you choose to maintain, how you work

to improve your abilities, or what you do for your fellow workers a person sacrifice.” – Stephen Gregg, Chairman and CEO of Ethix Corp. [Page 15]

13. Commitment Deals with the Smallest Details

Undoubtedly Michelangelo’s talent created the potential for greatness, but without commitment, his influence would have been minimal. That level of commitment could be seen in his attention to the fine details as well as the overarching vision. When asked why he was working so diligently on a dark corner of the Sistine Chapel that no one would ever see, Michelangelo’s simple reply was, “God will see.” [Pages 17-18]

14. Never Turn Away from the Goal

The world has never seen a great leader who lacked commitment. Ed McElroy of USAir spoke of its importance: “Commitment gives us new power. No matter what comes to us—sickness, poverty, or disaster—we never turn our eye from the goal.” [Page 18]

15. Live Daily with Commitment

The only *real* measure of commitment is action. Arthur Gordon acknowledged, “Nothing is easier than saying words. Nothing is harder than living them day after day.” [Page 19]

16. Make Your Plans Public

If taking the first step toward commitment is a problem, try doing what Thomas Edison did. When he had a good idea for an invention, he would call a press conference to announce it. Then he’d go into his lab and invent it. Make your plans public, and you might be more committed to following through with them. [Page 22]

Chapter 4: Communication: Without It You Travel Alone

17. Communicators Simplify Things

“Educators take something simple and make it complicated. Communicators take something complicated and make it simple.” – John C. Maxwell [Page 23]

18. Keep It Simple

Contrary to what some educators teach, the key to effective communication is simplicity. Forget about impressing people with big words or complex sentences. If you want to connect with people, keep it simple. Napoleon Bonaparte used to tell his secretaries. “Be clear, be clear, be clear.” [Page 26]

19. Great Communicators Believe in People

As you communicate with people—whether individuals or groups—ask yourself these questions: Who is my audience? What are their questions? What needs to be accomplished? And how much time do I have? If you want to become a better communicator, become audience oriented. People believe in great communicators because great communicators believe in people. [Pages 26-27]

20. Communication Is Action

As you communicate, never forget that the goal of all communication is action. If you dump a bunch of information on people, you’re not communicating. Every time you speak to people, give them something to feel, something to remember, and something to do. [Page 27]

21. Keep It Simple and Clear

Examine a letter, memo, or other item you’ve recently written. Are your sentences short and direct or do they meander? Will your readers be able to grasp the words you’ve chosen, or will they have to scramble for a dictionary? Have you used the fewest words possible? To communicator, your best friends are simplicity and clarity. Write your next piece of communication keeping both in mind. [Page 28]

Chapter 5. Competence: If You Build It, They Will Come

22. Be Practical

“The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.” —*John Gardner, Author* [Page 30]

Chapter 6. Courage: One Person with Courage Is a Majority

23. Courage Is Needed First

“Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities...because it is the quality which guarantees all others.” –Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister [Page 37]

24. Taking Risks

Larry Osborne offers this observation: “The most striking thing about highly effective leaders is how little they have in common. What one swears by, another warns against. But one trait stands out: the willingness to risk.” [Page 40]

25. Challenge and Controversy Make the Man

Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. declared, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” [Page 40]

26. Speak the Truth

A nineteenth-century circuit-riding preacher named Peter Cartwright was preparing to deliver a sermon one Sunday when he was warned that President Andrew Jackson was in attendance, and he was asked to keep his remarks inoffensive. During that message, he included these statements: “I have been told that Andrew Jackson is in this congregation. And I have been asked to guard my remarks. What I must say is that Andrew Jackson will go to hell if he doesn’t repent of his sin.”

After the sermon, Jackson strode up to Cartwright. “Sir” the president said, “if I had a regiment of men like you, I could whip the world.” [Page 43]

Chapter 7. Discernment: Put an End to Unsolved Mysteries

27. Value the Nontraditional

Are you a discerning leader? When faced with complex issues, can you readily identify the heart of the matter? Are you able to see root causes of difficult problems without having to get every bit of information? Do you trust your intuition and rely on it as much as you do your intellect and experience? If not, you need to cultivate it. Value nontraditional thinking. Embrace change, ambiguity, and uncertainty. Broaden your horizons experientially. Your intuition will only increase with use. [Page 49]

28. Be Discerning

For a long time, the Swiss had a lock on watchmaking. They built the best watches money could buy, and by the 1940s, they produced 80 percent of all watches worldwide. In the late 1960s, when an inventor presented an idea for a new type of watch to the leaders of a Swiss watch company, they rejected it. In fact, every Swiss company he approached had the same negative reaction.

Believing his design had merit, the man took it to a company in Japan. The name of the organization was Seiko, the design of the watch was digital, and today, 80 percent of all watches use a digital design. One discernment-driven decision can change the entire course of your destiny. [Page 50]

Chapter 8. Focus: The Sharper It Is, The Sharper You Are

29. Grow as a Leader

If you dedicate time to new things related to areas of strength, then you'll grow as a leader. Don't forget: in leadership, if you're through growing, you're through. [Page 55]

30. Divide Focus Works Against You

Experienced animal trainers take a stool with them when they step into a cage with a lion. Why a stool? It tames a lion better than anything—except maybe a tranquilizer gun. When the trainer holds the stool with the legs extended toward the lion's face, the animal tries to focus on all four legs at once. And that paralyzes him. Divided focus always works against you. [Page 57]

Chapter 9. Generosity: Your Candle Loses Nothing When It Lights Another

31. Give First

“No person was ever been honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” —Calvin Coolidge, American President [Page 58]

32. Put Others First

The measure of a leader is not the number of people who serve him, but the number of people he serves. Generosity requires putting others first. [Page 62]

33. Three Groups of People

...people can be divided into three groups: “Haves, have-nots, and have not paid for what they have.” [Page 62]

34. Be as Generous as Possible

John Bunyan affirmed, “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” If you aren’t giving in the small areas of your life, you’re probably not as generous a leader as you could be. [Page 63]

Chapter 10. Initiative: You Won’t Leave Home Without It

35. Successful People Don’t Quit

“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.” – Conrad Hilton, Hotel Executive [Page 66]

36. Action Comes from Belief

President Theodore Roosevelt, one of the great initiating leaders of the twentieth century, was able to say, “There is nothing brilliant or outstanding in my record, except perhaps this one thing: I do the things that I believe ought to be done ... And when I make up my mind to do a thing, I act.” [Page 70]

37. Finish the Job

It’s one thing to see opportunity. It’s another to do something about it. As someone once quipped, everyone has a great idea in the shower. But only a few people step out, dry off, and do something about it. Pick the best opportunity you see, and take it as far as you can. Don’t stop until you’ve done everything you can to make it happen. [Page 72]

Chapter 11. Listening: To Connect with Their Hearts, Use Your Ears

38. Connect with Your People

“The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people.” —Woodrow Wilson, American President [Page 74]

39. Tell a Leader What He Needs to Know

“A good leader encourages followers to tell him what he needs to know, not what he wants to hear.” —John C. Maxwell [Page 74]

40. Leaders Listen

An unwillingness to listen is too common among poor leaders. Peter Drucker, the father of American management, believes that 60 percent of all management problems are the result of faulty communications. I would say that the overwhelming majority of communication problems come from poor listening.

[Page 77]

41. Listen to the Person

Philip Stanhope, the earl of Chesterfield, believed, “many a man would rather you heard his story than granted his request.” If you’re in the habit of listening only to the facts and not the person who expresses them, change your focus—and really listen. [Page 77]

42. Keep in Contact with Those You Serve

A Cherokee saying states, “Listen to the whispers and you won’t have to hear the screams.” I am amazed by the leaders who are so caught up in their own ideas that they never hear their customers’ concerns, complaints, and suggestions. In his book *Business @ the Speed of Thought*, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates said, “Unhappy customers are always a concern. They’re also your greatest opportunity.” Good leaders always make it a priority to keep in contact with the people they’re serving.

[Page 78]

43. Learn by Listening

Larry King says, “I remind myself every morning: nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So if I’m going to learn, I must do it by listening.” As a leader you don’t want to base your actions on what the other guy is doing, but you should still listen and learn what you can to improve yourself. [Page 78]

44. Listen to Others

President Theodore Roosevelt was a man of action, but he was also a good listener, and he appreciated that quality in other people. Once at a gala ball, he grew tired of meeting people who returned his remarks with stiff, mindless pleasantries. So he began to greet people with a smile, saying, “I murdered my grandmother this morning.” Most people, so nervous about meeting him, didn’t even hear what he said. But one diplomat did. Upon hearing the president’s remark, he leaned over and whispered to him, “I’m sure she had it coming to her!” [Page 80]

Chapter 12. Passion: Take This Life and Love It

45. Lead Leaders

"To add growth, lead followers—to multiply, lead leaders." [Page 82]

46. Passion Brings Success

Experts spend a lot of time trying to figure out what makes people successful. They often look at people's credentials, intelligence, education, and other factors. But more than anything else, passion makes the difference. David Sarnoff of RCA maintains that "nobody can be successful unless he loves his work." [Page 83]

47. Passion Is the Key

If you look at the lives of effective leaders, you will find that they often don't fit into a stereotypical mold. For example, more than 50 percent of all CEOs of Fortune 500 companies had C or C- averages in college. Nearly 75 percent of all U.S. presidents were in the bottom half of their school classes. And more than 50 percent of all millionaire entrepreneurs never finished college. What makes it possible for people who might seem ordinary to achieve great things? The answer is passion. Nothing can take the place of passion in a leader's life. [Page 83]

48. Great Leaders Have Passion

Think of great leaders, and you will be struck by their passion: Gandhi for human rights, Winston Churchill for freedom, Martin Luther King Jr. for equality, Bill Gates for technology. [Page 84]

49. Passion is contagious

Associate with people of passion. It sounds hokey, but birds of a feather really do flock together. If you've lost your fire, get around some firefighters. Passion is contagious. Schedule some time with people who can infect you with it. [Page 87]

50. Be Willing to Pay the Price

General Billy Mitchell, a career army officer, was assigned to an aviation section in 1916. That's where he learned to fly, and it became the passion of his life. Though aircraft played a minor role in World War I, he could see the military potential of air power. After the war, he began a campaign to convince the military to create an air force. He provided demonstration after demonstration of what airplanes could

do, but he met strong resistance. Frustrated, he forced the army to court-martial him in 1925. A year later he resigned. Only after World War II was Mitchell exonerated—and posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He was willing to pay any price to do what he knew was right. How about you? [Page 87]

Chapter 13. Positive Attitude: If You Believe You Can, You Can

51. Change Your Attitude

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitude of mind.” —William James, Psychologist [Page 88]

52. Use Criticism to Succeed

“A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him.” —David Brinkley, Television Journalist [page 88]

53. Hard Work and a Positive Attitude

Life magazine named him the number one man of the millennium. The number of things he invented is astounding 1,093. He held more patents than any other person in the world, having been granted at least one every year for sixty-five consecutive years. He also developed the modern research laboratory. His name was Thomas Edison.

Most people credit Edison’s ability to creative genius. He credited it to hard work. “Genius,” he declared, “is ninety-nine percent perspiration and one percent inspiration.” I believe his success was also the result of a third factor: his positive attitude.

Edison was an optimist who saw the best in everything. “If we did all the things we were capable of doing,” he once said, “we would literally astound ourselves.” When it took him ten thousand tries to find the right materials for the incandescent light bulb, he didn’t see them as that many failures. With each attempt he gained information about what didn’t work, bringing him closer to a solution. He never doubted that he would find a good one. His belief could be summarized by his statement: “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

Probably the most notable display of Edison's positive attitude can be seen in the way he approached a tragedy that occurred when he was in his late sixties. The lab he had built in West Orange, New Jersey, was world famous. He called the fourteen-building complex his invention factory. Its main building was massive—greater than three football fields in size. From that base of operations, he and his staff conceived of inventions, developed prototypes, manufactured products, and shipped them to customers. It became a model for modern research and manufacturing.

Edison loved the place. He spent every minute he could there. He even slept there, often on one of the lab tables. But on a December day in 1914, his beloved lab caught fire. As he stood outside and watched it burn, he is reported to have said, "Kids, go get your mother. She'll never see another fire like this one."

Most people would have been crushed. Not Edison. "I am sixty-seven," he stated after the tragedy, "but not too old to make a fresh start. I've been through a lot of things like this." He rebuilt the lab, and he kept working for another seventeen years. "I am long on ideas, but short on time," he commented. "I expect to live to be only about a hundred." He died at age eighty-four. [Pages 89-90]

54. Self-pity Is Crippling

In *Earth and Altar*, Eugene H. Peterson wrote, "Pity is one of the noblest emotions available to human beings; self-pity is possibly the most ignoble . . . [It] is an incapacity, a crippling emotional disease that severely distorts our perception of reality ... a narcotic that leaves its addicts wasted and derelict." [Page 92]

55. When One Listens to Self, Unhappiness Comes

...Martyn Lloyd-Jones asserted, "Most unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself rather than talking to yourself." [Page 92]

56. We All Need Help

Alex Haley used to keep a picture in his office of a turtle on a fence post to remind him that everybody needed the help of others. [Pages 93-94]

57. The Tough Get Going

A mission organization wanted to send helpers to Dr. Livingstone, so its leader wrote, "Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to send other men to join you." Livingstone replied, "If you have men who will come *only* if they know there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come even if there is no road at all." [Pages 98-99]

58. Face Up to Reality

Broadcaster Paul Harvey said, "In times like these it is good to remember that there have always been times like these." No leader can simultaneously have his head in the sand and navigate his people through troubled waters. Effective leaders face up to the reality of a situation. [Page 99]

59. Few See the Goal

Author Alfred Armand Montapert wrote, "The majority see the obstacles; the few see the objectives; history records the successes of the latter, while oblivion is the reward of the former." [Page 99]

60. One Piece at a Time

Richard Sloma has this advice: "Never try to solve all the problems at once—make them line up for you one-by-one." [Page 99]

61. Don't Give Up When Down

Effective leaders understand the peak-to-peak principle. They make major decisions when they are experiencing a positive swing in their leadership, not during the dark times. As NFL fullback Bob Christian says, "I never decide whether it's time to retire during training camp." He knows not to give up when he is in the valley. [Page 100]

62. The TEACH Process

Some people have a hard time solving problems because they don't know how to tackle them. Try using the **TEACH** process:

Time—spend time to discover the real issue.

Exposure—find out what others have done.

A ssistance—have your team study all angles.
C reativity—brainstorm multiple solutions.
H it it—implement the best solution. [Page 101]

63. Step Over the Obstacles

Boxer Gene Tunney won the world heavyweight championship by beating Jack Dempsey. Most people don't know that when Tunney started his boxing career he was a power puncher. But before turning pro, he broke both hands. His doctor and manager told him he would never be a world champion as a result. But that didn't deter him.

“If I can't become a champion as a puncher,” he said, “I'll make it as a boxer.” He learned and he became one of the most skillful boxers ever to become champion. Never allow others to put obstacles in the pathway to your dreams. [Page 102]

Chapter 15. Relationships: If You Get Along, They'll Go Along

64. Get Along with Others

The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people. —*Theodore Roosevelt, American President* [Page 103]

65. Relate to Others

The ability to work with people and develop relationships is absolutely indispensable to effective leadership. According to the May 1991 issue of *Executive Female* magazine, a survey was taken of employers asking for the top three traits they desired in employees. Number one on the list was the ability to relate to people: 84 percent responded that they sought good interpersonal skills. Only 40 percent listed education and experience in their top three. And if *employees* need good people skills, think about how much more critical those skills are for *leaders*. People truly do want to go along with people they get along with. And while someone can have people skills and not be a good leader, he cannot be a good leader without people skills. [Page 106]

66. Keep the Interests of Others in Mind

Le Roy H. Kurtz of General Motors said, “The fields of industry are strewn with the bones of those organizations whose leadership became infested with dry rot, who believed in taking instead of giving . . . who didn't realize that the only assets that

could not be replaced easily were the human ones.” People respect a leader who keeps their interests in mind. If your focus is on what you can put into people rather than what you can get out of them, they’ll love and respect you—and these create a great foundation for building relationships. [Page 108]

67. The Power of Relationships

In a short story titled “The Capitol of the World,” Nobel prizewinning author Ernest Hemingway tells about a father and a teenage son, Pico, whose relationship breaks down. After the son runs away from home, the father begins a long journey in search of him. Finally, as a last resort, the man puts an ad in the local newspaper in Madrid. It reads, “Dear Paco, meet me in front of the newspaper office tomorrow at noon . . . all is forgiven... I love you.” The next morning in front of the newspaper office were eight hundred men named Paco, desiring to restore a broken relationship. Never underestimate the power of relationships on people’s lives. [Page 110]

Chapter 16. Responsibility: If You Won’t Carry the Ball, You Can’t Lead the Team

68. Accept Responsibility

Success on any major scale requires you to accept responsibility . . . In the final analysis, the one quality that all successful people have is the ability to take on responsibility. —*Michael Korda, Editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster* [Page 111]

69. Carry the Ball

Reflecting on current attitudes, my friend Haddon Robinson observes, “If you want to get rich, invest in victimization. It is America’s fastest growing industry.” He points out that millions of people are becoming rich by identifying, representing, interviewing, treating, insuring, and counseling victims.

Good leaders never embrace a victim mentality. They recognize that who and where they are remain their responsibility— not that of their parents, their spouses, their children, the government, their bosses, or their coworkers. They face whatever life throws at them and give it their best, knowing that they will get an opportunity to lead the team only if they’ve proved that they can carry the ball. [Page 114]

70. Work for the Maximum Potential

In a study of self-made millionaires, Dr. Thomas Stanley of the University of Georgia found that they all have one thing in common: they work hard. One millionaire was asked why he worked twelve to fourteen hours a day. He answered, “It took me fifteen years, working for a large organization, to realize that in our society you work eight hours a day for survival, and if you work only eight hours a day, all you do is survive ... Everything over eight hours is an investment in your future.” No one can do the minimum and reach his maximum potential. [Page 114]

71. Leaders Produce

The ultimate quality of a responsible person is the ability to finish. In *An Open Road*, Richard L. Evans writes, “It is priceless to find a person who will take responsibility, who will finish and follow through to the final detail—to know when someone has accepted an assignment that it will be effectively, conscientiously completed.” If you want to lead, you’ve got to produce. [Page 115]

Chapter 17. Security: Competence Never Compensates for Insecurity

72. Not Great When All the Credit Is Taken

“No man will make a *great* leader who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit for doing it.” —*Andrew Carnegie, industrialist* [Page 118]

73. Facing Criticism

During the term of President Ronald Reagan, leaders of seven industrial nations were meeting at the White House to discuss economic policy. Reagan has recounted that during the meeting he came across Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau strongly upbraiding British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, telling her that she was all wrong and that her policies wouldn’t work. She stood there in front of him with her head up, listening until he was finished. Then she walked away.

Following the confrontation, Reagan went up to her and said, “Maggie, he should never have spoken to you like that. He was out of line, just entirely out of line. Why did you let him get away with that?”

Thatcher looked at Reagan and answered, “A woman must know when a man is being simply childish.”

That story surely typifies Margaret Thatcher. It takes a strong, secure person to succeed as a world leader. And that is especially true when the person is a woman.

Margaret Thatcher has continually swum upstream throughout her life. As a student at Oxford University, she majored in chemistry, a field dominated by men, and she became the first woman president of the Oxford University Conservative Association. A few years later, she qualified as a lawyer and practiced as a tax specialist.

In 1959, Thatcher entered politics, another overwhelmingly male profession, when she was elected a member of Parliament. Analytical, articulate, and calm under fire, she was frequently asked by her party to face opponents in debate. Her skill and conviction may have been fired by an attitude she learned from her father who told her “You don’t follow the crowd; you make up your own mind.”

Her strong resolve and high competence earned her several government posts. It was during her tenure as secretary of state for education and science that she was referred to as “the most unpopular woman in Britain.” But Thatcher didn’t waver under the criticism. She continued working hard and gaining people’s respect. Her reward was being named the first female prime minister in the history of Britain.

In that position, she continued to face criticism. She weathered abuse for privatizing state-owned industries, reducing the role of organized labor sending troops to the Falkland Islands, and maintaining conservative policies against the Soviet Union. But no matter how severely she was criticized, she remained secure in her convictions and maintained her self-respect. She once said, “To me consensus seems to be the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values, and policies in search of something in which no one believes . . . What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner, ‘I stand for consensus’?”

Thatcher stood for conviction in leadership. And as a result, the “Iron Lady,” as she was called, was elected to three consecutive terms as prime minister. She is the only British leader of the modern era to achieve that. [Pages 119-120]

74. Insecurity Is a Danger

Insecure leaders are dangerous—to themselves, their followers, and the organizations they lead—because a leadership position amplifies personal flaws.

Whatever negative baggage you have in life only gets more difficult to bear when you're trying to lead others. [Page 121]

Chapter 18. Self-Discipline: The First Person You Lead Is You

75. Discipline Necessary

Author H. Jackson Brown Jr. quipped, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it’s going to be forward, backwards, or sideways.” If you know you have talent, and you’ve seen a lot of motion—but little concrete results—you may lack self-discipline. [Page 130]

76. Do What You Can Today

A nursery in Canada displays this sign on its wall: “The best time to plant a tree is twenty-five years ago ... The second best time is today.” [Page 132]

Chapter 19. Servanthood: To Get Ahead, Put Others First

77. Servant’s Heart

“The true leader serves. Serves people. Serves their best interests, and in so doing will not always be popular, may not always impress. But because true leaders are motivated by loving concern rather than a desire for personal glory, they are willing to pay the price.” —*Eugene B. Habecker, Author* [Page 133]

78. Military Servanthood

Not long ago Americans became acquainted with U.S. Army General H. Norman Schwarzkopf. He displayed highly successful leadership abilities in commanding the allied troops in the Persian Gulf War, just as he had done throughout his career, beginning in his days at West Point.

In *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, I wrote how in Vietnam he turned around a battalion that was in shambles. The First Battalion of the Sixth Infantry—known as the “worst of the sixth”—went from laughingstock to effective fighting force and were selected to perform a more difficult mission. That turned out to be an assignment to what Schwarzkopf described as “a horrible, malignant place” called the Batangan Peninsula. The area had been fought over for thirty years, was covered with mines and booby traps, and was the site of numerous weekly casualties from those devices.

Schwarzkopf made the best of a bad situation. He introduced procedures to greatly reduce casualties, and whenever a soldier *was* injured by a mine, he flew out to check on the man, had him evacuated using his chopper and talked to the other men to boost their morale.

On May 28, 1970, a man was injured by a mine, and Schwarzkopf flew to the man's location. While the helicopter was evacuating the injured soldier, another soldier stepped on a mine, severely injuring his leg. The man thrashed around on the ground, screaming and wailing. That's when everyone realized the first mine hadn't been a lone booby trap. They were all standing in the middle of a minefield.

Schwarzkopf believed the injured man could survive and even keep his leg—but only if he stopped flailing around. There was only one thing he could do. He had to go after the man and immobilize him. Schwarzkopf wrote, “I started through the minefield, one slow step at a time, staring at the ground, looking for telltale bumps or little prongs sticking up from the dirt. My knees were shaking so hard that each time I took a step, I had to grab my leg and steady it with both hands before I could take another ...It seemed like a thousand years before I reached the kid.

The 240-pound Schwarzkopf, who had been a wrestler at West Point, then pinned the wounded man and calmed him down. It saved his life. And with the help of an engineer team, Schwarzkopf got him and the others out of the minefield.

The quality that Schwarzkopf displayed that day could be described as heroism, courage, or even foolhardiness. But I think the word that best describes it is *servanthood*. On that day in May, the only way he could be effective as a leader was to serve the soldier who was in trouble. [Pages 134-135]

79. Get to Know Others

Learn to walk slowly through the crowd. One of the greatest lessons I learned as a young leader came from my father. I call it walking slowly through the crowd. The next time you attend a function with a number of clients, colleagues, or employees, make it your goal to connect with others by circulating among them and talking to people. Focus on each person you meet. Learn his name if you don't know it already. Make your agenda getting to know each person's needs, wants, and desires.

Then later when you go home, make a note to yourself to do something beneficial for half-of-a-dozen of those people. [Page 139]

80. Serve the Lowest

Albert Schweitzer wisely stated, “I don’t know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: The ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.” If you want to lead on the highest level, be willing to serve on the lowest. [Pages 139-140]

Chapter 20. Teachability: To Keep Leading, Keep Learning

81. Listen and Read

“Value your listening and reading time at roughly ten times your talking time. This will assure you that you are on a course of continuous learning and self-improvement.” —Gerald McGinnis, President and CEO of Respirationics, Inc. [Page 141]

82. Remember the Mistakes

Teddy Roosevelt asserted, “He who makes no mistakes, makes no progress.” That’s true. But the leader who keeps making *the same* mistakes also makes no progress. As a teachable leader, you will make mistakes. Forget them, but always remember what they taught you. If you don’t, you will pay for them more than once. [Page 146]

83. Continue to Learn in Your Area of Expertise

Read six to twelve books a year on leadership or your field of specialization. Continuing to learn in an area where you are already an expert prevents you from becoming jaded and unteachable. [Page 147]

84. Be Teachable Today

After winning his third world championship, bull rider Tuff Hedeman didn’t have a big celebration. He moved on to Denver to start the new season—and the whole process over again. His comment: “The bull won’t care what I did last week.” Whether you’re an untested rookie or a successful veteran, if you want to be a champion tomorrow, be teachable today. [Page 147]

Chapter 21. Vision: You Can Seize Only What You Can See

85. See the Possibilities

“The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious.” – John Sculley, former CEO of Pepsi and Apple Computer. [Page 148]

86. Vision Leads the Leader

Vision is everything for a leader. It is utterly indispensable. Why? Because vision leads the leader. It paints the target. It sparks and fuels the fire within, and draws him forward. It is also the fire lighter for others who follow that leader. Show me a leader without vision, and I'll show you someone who isn't going anywhere. At best, he is traveling in circles. [Page 150]

87. See the BIG Picture

From 1923 to 1955, Robert Woodruff served as president of Coca-Cola. During that time, he wanted Coca-Cola to be available to every American serviceman around the world for five cents, no matter what it cost the company. What a bold goal! But it was nothing compared to the bigger picture he could see in his mind's eye. In his lifetime, he wanted every person in the *world* to have tasted Coca-Cola. [Page 154]

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