

## 5 Top Leadership Quotes by Famous People

Guest Article by the Management Faculty of the [University of Notre Dame](#), and edited by [Lyndsay Swinton](#), owner MFTROU.

Leadership quotes by famous people are usually about the qualities it takes to be a good leader. But every quote is slightly different; each summarizes a distinctive leadership quality or trait, perhaps the quality that resonated most with the person who stated it.

It's an age old question, "What does it take to be a good leader?" For centuries, politicians, business leaders, writers, philosophers and pundits have tried to define the qualities of a good leader. In fact, nearly every United States president has offered a definition or an insightful quote about leadership. While many great leadership quotes are taken from the battlefield or a famous political speech, they often seamlessly transfer into other areas of leadership: business, sports or even the day-to-day routine of raising a family and operating a household.

Here are 5 top leadership quotes by famous people, with suggestions on how to use them in your everyday life:

### **1. "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."**

#### **John F. Kennedy**

This quote was taken from JFK's speech prepared for delivery in Dallas on the day of his assassination, November 22, 1963. One of the most important qualities of a great leader (if not *the* most important) is to never stop learning. You might have all the qualities that make up a good leader in the business world, but your surroundings are constantly changing.

Factors like new technology, downsizing and fluctuating markets all play a role in challenging your leadership skills. Never become complacent.

Take the initiative to learn something new each week. Do you know what each person on your staff does and how it plays a role in your organization? Make sure you read trade magazines and stay in touch with other business executives; the moment you stop learning is when you become less of a leader and more of a follower.

## 2. "A good leader takes a little more share of the blame, a little less than his share of credit." Arnold Glasow

After the Great Depression, American businessman and humorist Arnold Glasow started his own company that marketed a humor magazine to businesses. He recognized that strong business leaders needed to have accountability for both the positive and negative results that occur under their direction.



Additionally, good leaders need to know when to recognize others who helped the company achieve success; stepping out of the spotlight in good times, and stepping into the spotlight in bad times, shows strength, courage and humility.

## 3. "Leadership: the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it." Dwight D. Eisenhower

Dwight D. Eisenhower knew that in order to be a great leader, one of the greatest qualities needed was the power to motivate others. Knowing the right tools and techniques (and possessing a certain level of charm and charisma), is key to motivating others. But the idea is to not only motivate people to do what you want them to do; you need to reach them in a way so that they actually *want* to do what you're asking them to do (not just because you're telling them to do it).

Validate your team's strengths; make them feel like you're relying on their skills and experience to get the job done. People often rise to the occasion when given the opportunity, so give your staff the chance to demonstrate their strengths.

**4. "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." Martin Luther King Jr.**

Just as you want your team to rise to the occasion and prove their worth, you'll often need to prove your worth. It's easy to coast during good times, but are you prepared for controversy or debilitating set-backs?

During bad times, others will rely on you for guidance, strength and reassurance. Make sure you have a disaster game plan readily accessible. Be prepared for the worst – just as you have mapped out future goals and accomplishments, you need to create an outline of emergency situations and how you'll respond.

**5. "Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." John D. Rockefeller**

As one of America's most successful businessmen and philanthropists, John D. Rockefeller should know about aiming high. While reaching goals and celebrating success is rewarding, don't ever be too content.



Be willing to take risks; you never know what is possible to achieve if you don't put yourself out there. The sign of a great leader is one who has enough confidence to leave the known for the unknown. Map out a strategy and go for what you truly want. However lofty, you'll never know if your goals are achievable unless you try.

### **About the author**

This article was written by the Management Faculty of the [University of Notre Dame](#), which offers online [leadership and management training](#) courses. It was edited by Lyndsay Swinton, owner MFTROU.

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