

# 175 Great Leadership Quotes

1. Every one of us, unconsciously, works out a personal philosophy of life, by which we are guided, inspired, and corrected, as time goes on. It is this philosophy by which we measure out our days, and by which we advertise to all about us the man, or woman, that we are. . . . It takes but a brief time to scent the life philosophy of anyone. It is defined in the conversation, in the look of the eye, and in the general mien of the person. It has no hiding place. It's like the perfume of the flower — unseen, but known almost instantly. It is the possession of the successful, and the happy. And it can be greatly embellished by the absorption of ideas and experiences of the useful of this earth.

– George Matthew Adams

2. No amount of human having or human doing can make up for a deficit in human being.

– John Adams

3. Champions aren't made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them... a desire, a dream, a vision.

– Muhammad Ali

4. The key to happiness is having dreams; the key to success is making them come true.

– James Allen

5. Come to the edge, he said. They said "We are afraid". "Come to the edge," he said. They came he pushed them,... and they flew

–Guillaume Appollinaire

6. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act but a habit.

– Aristo

7. You must have long-range goals to keep from being frustrated by short-term failures.  
- Bob Bales

8. Of all earthly music that which reaches farthest into heaven is the beating of a truly loving heart.

- Henry Ward Beecher

9. The human heart has hidden treasures,  
In secret kept, in silence sealed.

- Charlotte Bronte

10. Behind every successful man there's a lot of unsuccessful years.  
- Bob Brown

11. Take a deep breath and realize that your life will turn out exactly as it is meant to turn out. ... You can spend a lot of time and energy anguishing about it ... but in the end, it will unfold exactly as it is meant to.

- Dr. Joy Browne

12. The successful man is one who had the chance and took it.  
- Roger Babson

13. Effective leaders put words to the formless longing and deeply felt needs of others.  
- Warren Bennis

14. There is a calmness to a life lived in gratitude, a quiet joy.  
- Ralph Blum

15. The ability to perceive or think differently is more important than the knowledge gained.  
-David Bohm

16. Collective wisdom is a mystery that has predictable patterns. It is an understanding beyond the intellect; it is a knowing that emerges from not knowing. It depends on conversation and is most powerfully felt in the silences that arise within those conversations. It is experienced in groups, yet is often catalyzed by or reflected in the behavior of an individual. And it has positive, even dramatic effects on group cohesion and action, yet it cannot be willed into existence, controlled, or even planned for.

- From The Power of Collective Wisdom by  
Alan Briskin, et. al.

17. We are so used to breaking things down into parts and pieces that we forget to look for what binds us together. We must learn to shift our perspective back to what makes people and groups whole, to find what connects us together as a family, an organization, a nation, a world.

- From The Power of Collective Wisdom by  
Alan Briskin, et. al.

18. One need ask only one question, "What for? What am I to unify my being for?" The reply is: not for my own sake.

-Martin Buber

19. The task of leadership is not to put greatness in humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there.

- John Buchan

20. Meditate.  
Live purely. Be quiet.  
Do your work with mastery.  
Like the moon, come out  
from behind the clouds!  
Shine.

- Buddha

21. Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think.  
Joy follows a pure thought like a shadow that never leaves.

- Buddha

22. There are two mistakes one can make along the road to truth -  
Not going all the way, and not starting.

- Buddha

23. It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.  
If you think about that, you'll do things differently.

- Warren Buffett

24. You will never find time for anything. You must make it.

- Charles Buxton

25. Where you stumble, there your treasure lies.

- Joseph Campbell

26. Success is getting what you want. Happiness is wanting what you get.

- Dale Carnegie

27. To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common — this is my symphony.

– William Henry Channing

28. The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.

– Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

29. Our duty as men is to proceed as if limits to our ability did not exist. We are collaborators in creation."

– Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

30. Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.

– Winston Churchill

31. I don't know the key to success,  
But the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

– Bill Cosby

32. If you put good people in bad systems you get bad results. You have to water the flowers you want to grow.

– Stephen Covey

33. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

- Steven Covey

34. To be nobody-but-yourself — in a world which is doing its best night and day, to make you everybody else — means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting.

- e. e. cummings

35. For true success ask yourself these four questions:

Why? Why not? Why not me? Why not now?

- Jimmy Dean

36. Whatever the question, the answer is love.

- Barbara DeAngelis

37. To love for the sake of being loved is human,  
but to love for the sake of loving is angelic.

- Alphonse de Lamartine

38. I dwell in possibility.

- Emily Dickinson

39. The secret of success is to be ready when your opportunity comes.

- Benjamin Disraeli

40. We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence and its only end.

- Benjamin Disraeli

41. When nothing is sure, everything is possible.

-Margaret Drabble

42. Leadership is not magnetic personality – that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not "making friends and influencing people" – that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to high sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.

- Peter F. Drucker

43. It's not our circumstances but our ability and willingness to work together that makes the difference between heaven and hell

- Sue Dyer, Partner Your Project

44. An angel is an idea of God.

- Meister Eckhardt

45. People should not consider so much what they are to do, as what they are.

-Meister Eckhart

46. A human being is part of the whole, called by us 'universe,' a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

- Albert Einstein

47. In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity.

- Albert Einstein

48. It's not that I'm smart. It's just that I stay with problems longer.

- Albert Einstein

49. The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious.  
It is the source of all true art and science.

- Albert Einstein

50. It is never too late to be what you might have been.

- George Eliot

51. Deep, unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state.

- George Eliot

52. A problem is a chance for you to do your best.

- Duke Ellington

53. Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is for you.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

54. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

55. Pass in, pass in, the angels say,  
In to the upper doors,  
Nor count compartments of the floors  
But mount to paradise  
By the stairway of surprise.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

56. First, say to yourself what you would be. Then do what you have to do.

- Epictetus

57. No man is free who is not a master of himself.

- Epictetus

58. When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.

- Cherokee Expression

59. Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.

- William Feather

60. Change is the timeless interplay of the forces of creation and destruction.

- Janet Feldman

61. Do not find fault. Find a remedy.

- Henry Ford

62. It is observed that successful people get ahead in the time that other people waste.  
- Henry Ford

63. Obstacles are those frightful things you can see when you take your eyes off your goal.  
- Henry Ford

64. The way to succeed is to double your failure rate.  
Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.  
- Henry Ford

65. Whoever you are, wherever you may be, the Golden Key to harmony is in your hand now.  
... All that you have to do is this: Stop thinking about the difficulty, whatever it is, and think about God instead.

- Emmett Fox

66. everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitudes in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.  
- Viktor Frankl

67. We who lived in concentration camps can remember those who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a person but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

- Viktor Frankl

68. Well done is better than well said.

- Benjamin Franklin

69. Faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everybody gets busy on the proof.

- John Kenneth Galbraith, Economist

70. A "No" uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a "Yes" merely uttered to please, or what is worse, to avoid trouble.

- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

71. You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

- Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi

72. Leaders must attend to one key growth question. How authentically am I showing up in the world and in my organization.

- Tom Gegax

73. And think not you can direct the course of love,  
for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

- Kahlil Gibran

74. Just trust yourself, then you will know how to live.

- Goethe

75. Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness... Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.

- Goethe

76. Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.

- Goethe

77. The leader for today and the future will be focused on how to be – how to develop quality, character, mind-set, values, principles, and courage.

-Frances Hasselbein

78. Leaders must have the courage of self-expression to reveal their doubts and weaknesses in order to build strong, trusting effective relationships.

-Rob Hawthorne

79. Purpose is the still point – the peaceful center around which all dynamic leadership revolves.

-Rob Hawthorne

80. Love is always the answer to healing of any sort.  
And the pathway to love is forgiveness.

- Louise Hay

81. The leader teaches more through Being than through doing. The quality of one's silence conveys more than long speeches.

-John Heider

82. To change how we see things takes falling in love. Then the same becomes altogether different. Like love, a shift of sight can be redemptive . . .

- James Hillman

83. What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

84. Carpe Diem! Rejoice while you are alive;  
enjoy the day; live life to the fullest;  
make the most of what you have.  
It is later than you think.

- Horace, Latin poet

85. To be successful, you must decide exactly what you want to accomplish, then resolve to pay the price to get it.

- Bunker Hunt

86. Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.

- Aldous Huxley

87. We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.

- Lee Iococca

88. Great minds have purpose, Others have wishes.

- George Irving

89. Great minds have purpose, Others have wishes.

- George Irving

90. Too many of us have lost touch with the fire of conversation. When we talk together, it is rarely with depth. We see our conversations as either opportunities to trade information or arenas in which to win points. Difficulties that might otherwise be resolved persist. And often we find we simply do not have the wherewithal to genuinely consider new options. Such misunderstanding condemns us to look elsewhere for the creative intensity that lies dormant within and between it. Yet it is an intensity that could revitalize our institutions, our relationships, and ourselves.

- Bill Isaacs

91. The most important parts of any conversation are those that neither party could have imagined before starting.

- Bill Isaacs

92. I can accept failure but I can't accept not trying.

- Michael Jordan

93. I have failed over and over again - that is why I succeed.

- Michael Jordan

94. One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.

- Helen Kell

95. Keep your face to the sunshine, and you cannot see the shadow.

- Helen Keller

96. Keep your face to the sunshine, and you cannot see the shadow.

- Helen Keller

97. Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.

- Helen Keller

98. In nature there are no rewards or punishments; there are consequences.

- From Robert W. Kent

99. Overcome any bitterness that may have come because you were not up to the magnitude of pain that was entrusted to you. Like the mother of the world who carries the pain of the world in her heart, each one of us is part of her heart, and therefore endowed with a certain measure of cosmic pain. You are sharing in the totality of that pain. You are called upon to meet it in joy.

- Pir Vilayat Khan

100. Authenticity is the single most important quality of leadership. You cannot "get authentic" by delivering a great speech. It is demonstrated day-to-day through thousands of micro-behaviors.

-Bob Kidder

101. To venture causes anxiety, but to not venture is to lose one's self...And to venture in the highest is precisely to be conscious of one's self.

-Sore Kierkegaard

102. My religion is kindness.

- The Dalai Lama

103. The past shapes us, but by following the deep calling to heal ourselves and throw off old curses, we may be able to reshape our response to that past and perhaps even the way in which we remember it.

- Gregg Levoy

104. The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.

- Vince Lombardi

105. I would rather be ashes than dust! I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time.

- Jack London

106. Life's most urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"

-Martin Luther King Jr.

107. The greatest glory in living lies not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.

- Nelson Mandela

108. Successful leaders see the opportunities in every difficulty rather than the difficulty in every opportunity.

- Reed Markha

109. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

– Margaret Mead

110. We cannot live only for ourselves alone. A thousand fibers connect us with each other; and along these fibers our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects.

– Herman Melville

111. Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in ones favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets: 'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it! Boldness has genius, magic, and power in it.'

– William Hutchinson Murray

112. I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.

– Ralph Nader

113. The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.

– Ralph Nader

114. Use your words not to describe your life but to create it.

– Joel Osteen

115. As you change your words, you change your world.

- Catherine Ponder

116. Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your life.  
Learn to love the questions themselves,  
until some distant day, without your knowing,  
you will have lived into the answers.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

117. It is in the small decisions you and I make every day that create our destiny.

- Anthony Robbins

118. The secret of success is learning how to use pain and pleasure instead of having pain  
and pleasure use you. If you do that, you're in control of your life.  
If you don't, life controls you.

- Anthony Robbins

119. To be a champion, you have to believe in yourself when nobody else will.

- Sugar Ray Robinson

120. There is no cure except the retreat into love for the suffering of subtly afflicted hearts.

- Rumi

121. The soul is here for its own joy.

- Rumi

122. When physical vision has transcended space, Another sky opens to the eyes of the  
soul.

- Rumi

123. I would rather attempt something great and fail than attempt to do nothing and succeed.

- Dr. Robert Schuller

124. Success is never ending, failure is never final.

- Dr. Robert Schuller

125. Man's ideal state is realized when he has fulfilled the purpose for which he is born. And what is it that reason demands of him? Something very easy - that he live in accordance with his own nature.

- Seneca

126. Personal mastery means approaching one's life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to reactive viewpoint.

- Peter Senge

127. Our doubts are traitors  
And make us lose the good we oft may win  
By fearing to attempt.

- William Shakespeare

128. A life spent in making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.

- George Bernard Shaw

129. When I was young I observed that nine out of ten things I did were failures, so I did ten times more work.

- George Bernard Shaw

130. How do we activate that switch within each of us to open our minds, open our hearts, and open our wills?

- Inspired by Otto Sharmer

131. The angels speak to us through flowers.

- Meredith Young-Sowers

132. Spectacular achievements are always preceded by painstaking preparation.

- Roger Staubach

133. For nitrates are not the land, nor phosphates and the length of fiber in the cotton is not the land. Carbon is not a man, nor salt nor water nor calcium. He is all these, but he is much more, much more; and the land is so much more than its analysis.

- John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

134. Lookie, Ma. I been all day an' all night hidin' alone. Guess who I been thinkin' about? Casy! Says one time he went out in the wilderness to find his own soul, an' he foun' he didn't have no soul that was his'n. Says he foun' he jus' got a little piece of a great big soul. Says a wilderness ain't no good, 'cause his little piece of a soul wasn't no good 'less it was with the rest, an' was whole. But I know now a fella ain't no good alone.

- John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

135. The evening was hot, and the thrust of light still flowed up from the western horizon. And without any signal the family gathered by the truck, and the congress, the family government, went into session...they seemed to be a part of an organization of the unconscious. They obeyed impulses which registered only faintly in their thinking minds. Their eyes were inward and quiet, and their eyes, too, were lucent in the evening, lucent in dusty.

– John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

136. Human life has been given to you for the sole purpose of realizing the Self. If you die without realizing the Self, your life has been wasted.

– Annamalai Swam

137. Success is a journey, not a destination.

– Ben Sweetland

138. I have spent my days stringing and unstringing my instrument while the song I came to sing remains unsung.

– Rabindranath Tagore

139. Holiness grows so fast where there is kindness. The world is lost for want of sweetness and kindness. Do not forget we need each other.

– Mother Teresa

140. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor.

– Henry David Thoreau

141. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.

- Henry David Thoreau

142. Men are born to succeed, not to fail.

- Henry David Thoreau

143. As long as you are going to be thinking anyway, think big.

- Donald Trump

144. Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambition.

Small people always do that,

But the really great

Make you feel that

You, too, can become great.

- Mark Twain

145. Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet sheds

on the heel that has crushed it.

- Mark Twain

146. A leader is best when people barely know that he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worst when they despise him. Fail to honor people, they fail to honor you.

But of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aims fulfilled, they will all say,

"We did this ourselves."

- Lao-Tzu

147. A leader is best when people barely know he exists, When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, They will say: We did it ourselves."

- Lao-Tzu

148. I have three precious things to which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men.

- Lao-Tzu

149. The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things.

- Lao-Tzu

150. The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

- Lao-Tzu

151. The way to do is to be.

-Lao Tzu

152. If you hear a voice within you saying, 'You are not a painter,' then by all means paint . . . and that voice will be silenced.

- Vincent Van Gogh

153. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

154. There are two primary choices in life:

To accept conditions as they exist,  
Or accept the responsibility for changing them.

- Dennis Waitley

155. The winners in life think constantly in terms of I can, I will, and I am.  
Losers, on the other hand, concentrate their waking thoughts on what they should have or would have done, or what they can't do.

- Dennis Waitley

156. Life ought to be a struggle of desire towards adventures whose nobility will fertilize the soul.

-Rebecca West

157. Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

- Harold Whitman

158. We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.

- Thornton Wilder

159. Man never made any material as resilient as the human spirit.

-Ben Williams

160. As we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

-Marianne Williamson

161. The key to enchanted possibilities in intimacy is the element of God's love, the choice to invite a mystical Third to live with us and breathe in us.

- Marianne Williamson

162. Our deepest fears is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We are ourselves. Who am to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing a small part doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that others won't feel insecure around you. We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone.

-Marianne Williamson

163. If you don't know what your passion is, realize that one reason for your existence on earth is to find it. ... God can dream a bigger dream for you than you could ever dream for yourself.

- Oprah Winfrey

164. You do not pay the price of success,  
You enjoy the price of success.

- Zig Ziglar

165. The man who moved a mountain was the one who began carrying away small stones.

- Chinese Proverb

166 What you bring forth out of yourself from the inside will save you. What you do not bring forth out of yourself will destroy you.

-Gospel of Thomas

167. Perhaps the most difficult behavior to overcome is a tendency to assign blame the minute something goes wrong. This very human propensity needs to be replaced with something that doesn't come naturally to most people: a dispassionate analysis of how both parties contributed to a problematic situation and what each can do to improve it.

- Harvard Business Review

168. It is not a matter of thinking much but of loving much.

- Teresa of Avila

169. Aloha is more than a word of greeting or farewell or a salutation. "Aloha" is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence. "Aloha" means to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen and to know the unknowable . . .

- The Aloha Law, from the State of Hawaii

170. At last I have found it . . . my vocation is Love!

- Therese of Lisieux

171. Jesus has no need of books or teachers to instruct souls; He teaches without the noise of words. Never have I heard him speak, but I feel he is within me at each moment. He is guiding and inspiring me with what I must say and do. I find, just when I need them, certain lights that I had not seen until then, and it isn't most frequently during the hours of prayer that these are most abundant, but rather in the midst of daily occupations.

- Therese of Lisieux

172. Jesus . . . set before me the book of nature; I understood how all the flowers He has created are beautiful, how the splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not take away the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy. I understood that if all flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose her springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be decked out with little wildflowers. And so it is with the world of souls, Jesus' garden.

- Therese of Lisieux

173. You must not set yourself up as a judge - that is God's right alone. Your only mission is to be an angel of peace.

- Therese of Lisieux

174. Awakening leading to transformation versus process leading to change.  
-Zen Proverb

175. Think, when you behold a flower, that it is calling specially to you. Contemplate beauty in the world around you, and you yourself will become beautiful.

-Anonymous